

FIFTEENE
S E R M O N S
V P O N T H E S O N G
O F S A L O M O N .

*Written by George Gyffard, Preacher of
the Word at Maulden in Essex.*



AT LONDON
Printed by *Barnard Alsop*, by the assignes
of *J. M.* and *G. N.* and are to be sold at
his house, by Saint *Ann's* Church,
neere Aldersgate.

1620.



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, and his very good Lord, *Robert Denoreux*, Earle of Essex and Ewe, Vicount Hereford and Bourgcher, Lord Ferrers of Chartly, Bourgcher and Louaine, Knight of the honorable Order of the Garter, Maister of the Horse, Generall of her Maiesties Ordinance and Munition, one of her most honorable priue Councill, and Earle Marshall of England.

G. Gyfford wisheth increase of all true honour in this life, and eternall felicitie in the life to come.



Iesus Christ, the King of Kings, betrothed himselfe to his Church of old time: shee is become his spouse whom hee loveth deere. The marriage shall be at the generall iudgement in the end of this world, when it shall be solemnized with great ioy and triumph, as it is written: I heard as the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of strong thundrings, saying, Hallelu-iah: for our Lord God almighty hath raigne. Let vs be glad and reioyce, and giue glory to him: for the marriage of the Lambe is come, and his wife hath made herselfe

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

ready. Reuel. 19. vers. 6. 7. In the meane time, while shee is a pilgrime heere vpon earth, there is (according to the ancient manner) a Loue-song betweene them, which king Salomon framed and penned, not guided by humane wisdom, but by the inspiration of the heauenly spirit. As it is a song betweene the two chiefe states, the highest Lord and the greatest Lady; so doth it containe the greatest mysteries, the most sweet and comfortable doctrine, and is therefore worthily named the Song of Songs. In it this Bridegroom and his Bride doe highly extoll and praise each other. To set forth his excellent dignitie, his riches and glory, with all those sweet things that flow vnto her from him, she doth bring in all the stateliest, the richest, the goodliest, and the sweetest things vnder heauen. The like doth hee in praising her beauty, and her delectable sweetnes. From hence doth spring the great delight and pleasure, which the one taketh in the other, where they doe (as it were) unfold the vehement passions of their loue, with that seruent desire which he hath to be most neerely ioyned vnto him, & to dwell with him for euer. Also there doe many goodly tokens passe between
them:

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

them: for he bestoweth vpon her very rich
jewels and heauenly ornaments to decke and
to beautifie her withall: and she againe ren-
dred vnto him the sweet fruits of her loue.
Moreouer her frailties, her imperfections,
and her vnkind dealing at sometimes to-
wards her welbeloued, are not omitted, nor
thesore afflictions, which by that occasion she
doth endure. And finding that his loue is
most stedfast, nothing altered nor diminished
by her frailty and vndutifulnes towards
him, she is the more enflamed to seeke after
him, and to craue his presence and protecti-
on, while she is heere below in the midst of so
many cruell enemies. Many other speciall
things there be which I doe heere omit. I doe
offer this booke vnto your Lordship, not that
I esteeme my slender laboures in expounding
it, worthy to come into your honourable
hands: but for the excellent worthinesse of
the matters therein contained. The Princes
and Nobles of the earth are delighted to
heare of matters which are stately, magnifi-
call and of great glory: because great things
do become great ones. Here are the greatest
of all. The Kings and Emperours of this
world, especially in their chiefe solemnities,

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

as in the dayes of their Coronation, or at the marriage of their sonnes and daughters, doe shew a greater glory in riches and delicate pleasure: but if we compare them with the glory, the riches and pleasure of this Bridegroom and his Bride, they shall be found to be but beggarly trash. For what are earthly, carnall, and transitory things, compared with the things which are spirituall, heavenly and euerlasting? Also of great matters delight men, which appertaine vnto others, how much more the greatest, which concerne themselves? For who is the Birde in this Song that is so deare vnto Christ, vpon whom so many ornaments and goodly iewels are bestowed? Verily the whole Church, but yet so the whole, as euery faithfull soule is the spouse decked and made beautifull for so glorious an husband. The blindnesse and mad folly of the world is here to be wondred at. Behold the wisdom of the flesh which glorieth in it selfe. If one should forsake an infinite treasure of pearle & precious stones, and lay hold of a heape of drosse, for some glittering shew making choyse of it, all men would haue him in derision. The foolishnes of the wisest worldlings is much greater.

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

ter, while they so set their hearts upon earthly riches, carnall delights, the pompe and glory of this world, and are so drowned in the vncleane lustes and pleasures of sinne, that they neglect the heauenly treasure, the rich iewels, and comely ornaments, spirituall ioy and glory which the Bridegroom Iesus Christ bestoweth upon his spouse. There is no care in seeking after them: they delight to haue their bodies set forth and made glorious with goodly attire, not caring how they defile the garments of their soule or what filthy and stinking rags of vices it be cloathed withall. I do not speake this, as though a man could not haue both the glory of this world, and that glory which is from aboue: for king David had both the one and the other: so had Salomon, with many other kings Nobles of the earth. But where any are so ouerwhelmed and enen drowned in the gulf of vaine delights, and so rest in the glory of this world as a thing to be gloried in, that they cannot seek after the heauenly glory, there is the foolishnes. It is no maruaile that the holy Ghost termeth the great wise men of this world fooles: for who seeth not how sodainly all vanisheth away as a shadow that is heere below? King

• The Epistle Dedicatorie.

David in Psal. 16. glorieth that God was the portion of his inheritance, and saith he had a faire heritage. But by & by he giueth thanks to God that gaue him counsell, yea euen by secret inspirations in the night, for if God had not taught him, he could neuer haue made so good a choise, when he was come to age, refused to be called the sonne of Pharaohs daughter, and chose rather to suffer aduersity with the people of God, then to enioy the pleasures of sinnes for a season. Esteeming the rebuke of Christ greater riches then the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect vnto the recompence of the reward. Heb. 11. 24. 25. 26. Your Lordship is taught of God to follow these, and to make the like choise, as it doth manifestly appeare by your singular loue and care to aduance his glorious Gospell: which maketh me to hope that my rude boldnes shall obtaine pardon. The most high God, increase and stablish your Honour, not only on earth, but also for euer in the high heauens. Amen.

Your Honours most dutifull to commaund.

George Gyffard.



SERMONS

V P O N T H E

Song of Salomon.

The first Sermon.

CHAP. I.

1 The Song of Songs which was Salomons.

2 Let him kisse mee with the kisses of his mouth: for thy loue is better then wine.

3 Because of the saour of thy good ointment, thy name is as an ointment powred out: therefore the virgins do loue thee.

4 Draw me, we will runne after thee: the king hath brought me into his chamber, we wil be glad and reioyce in thee, we will remember thy loue more then wine, the righteous doe loue thee.

5 I am blacke O daughters of Ierusalem;

B

but

Sermons vpon the

but comely as the fruits of Kedar, and as the curtaines of Salomon.

6 Regarde mee, not because I am blacke, for the Sunne hath looked vpon me: the sonnes of my mother were angry with mee, they made mee the Keeper of the vines, but I kept not mine owne vine.

Show mee, O thou whom my soule loueth, where thou feedest, where thou lyest at noone: why should I bee as shee that turneth aside to the flockes of thy company.



Efore that I enter into the handling of these wordes which I haue now read vnto you: It shall not be amisse to speake a few things in generall, touching this song, that you may

first looke vpon it, as vpon a goodly rich peece of worke, but fouled vp, and then afterwards haue it vnfouled and spreadde before your eyes, to the viewing of euery part thereof. Heere bee diuers persons brought in vttering their parts in it, but especially two, which are louers, betrothed each vnto the other. This is so cleare

cleare and so euident by the wordes that none can denye it. It is then without all controuerſie, a ſong betweene a Bridegroome and a Bride, or a ſong of betrothings, for it was the manner in olde time, to haue marriage ſongs and ſongs of eſpouſals. True it is, that this Bridegroome and this Bride are not named by any proper names in all this ſong: but yet it is out of all controuerſie, and as cleare as the Sunne, who they be, by that deſcription which is made of them: For hee is deſcribed to bee a King, and of that glory and maieſty which no mortall creature hath: and her beauty and glory alſo is ſet forth to bee ſuch, as far ſurmoun- teth all the glory of this world. Then of neceſſitie it doth follow, that this Bridegroome is Ieſus Chriſt the Redeemer, and Sauour of the World, and this bride is his Church. Theſe bee the two vehem- ent louers, which are here brought in. The holy Scriptures in other places doe vſe theſe ſpeeches of Chriſt and his Church, as that they are betrothed, and ſhall bee married. For the Church is cal- led *the Bride, the Lambes wife*, Reuel. 21. ver. 9. And the day of iudgement is cal-

led, *The day of their marriage*, Reu. 19, v. 7
 Also *Iohn the Baptist*, when some are displeased that Christ should haue more honour then hee, frameth this answere vnto them euen from this Song, saying, *He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroome: but the friend of the bridgroome which standeth & heareth him reioyceth greatly, because of the bridegroomes voice*, Iohn 3. ver. 29 where you may see how hee calleth Christ the Bridegroome, his Church the Bride, and himselfe the Bridegroomes friend. Christ calleth himselfe the Bridegroome, *Marke 3.* It was the ancient manner, that the parties which should bee man and wife, were betrothed, and then after some distance of time the marriage was solemnized. Betweene the time of their betrothing, and the marriage day, tokens of loue and kindnesse, did vse to passe betweene them: but when they are married, the wife is receyued into the society of her husband, to be partaker with him of all his riches and possessions. The Lord Iesus hath betrothed himselfe to his holy Spouse the Church, euen from the time of his promise made vnto *Adam and Eue*, *The seed of the woman shall breake the Serpents*

Song of Salomon.

5

pent's head, Gen. 3. The marriage between them shall bee solemnized at the day of iudgement, as I noted before, Reuel. 16:7. Then shall shee be receyued to dwell with him in the heauens, and bee partakers of his riches and glory.

In the meane time, while shee is heere in this world, hee sheweth great kindnes towards her, comforteth, supporteth and defendeth her, bestowing also many goodly gifts and ornaments vpon her, and she again for her part rendreth the tokens of her loue towards him: and this Song setteth foorth all these things which doe passe thus betweene them. But you must note that all their speeches is vnder an Allegorie, for when each of them dooth prayse the beauty and comelineesse of the other, looke what is beautifull, comely, or stately vnder heauen, it is brought in for to expresse the same. And to represent the spirituall and heauenly ornaments and iewel: which he bestoweth vpon her, and the fruits of her loue which she rendreth vnto him for the same, here are reckoned vp all the sweetest, the richest, and the most precious thinges that are found among men. There is but one

B 3

bride

Bridegroom, and one bride for all the elect from the beginning of the world unto the end, to make one holy Catholike Church, being all coupled together by one spirit, to make one bodie, whereof Christ is the head; but yet here are diuers persons brought in besides in this song, sometime speaking, and sometime spoken vnto. Yea the bride speaketh now and then of her mother, and of her little sister.

Here we must note, that it was the manner of olde, that the bridgroom had young men to bee his companions, and so this bridgroom hath his companions or friends, not onely the holy Angels which minister vnto him for the seruice of his Church, *Heb. 1.* but also the Prophets, the Apostles, and all faithfull Pastors and teachers, as *Iohn the Baptist* tearmeth himselfe one of his friends. Also the bride had virgins to be her companions, and with these this Spouse of Christ is saide to bee all so accompanied: These are called the daughters of *Ierusalem*. And touching the other matter that shee hath mother and a sister, that may seeme somewhat harder to be vnderstood: for her

her mother is the true Church, and her little sister also is the true church, and yet but one true church: how may this bee? This is easily answered: for it is the manner in the Hebrew tongue to call the whole the mother, and the parts of the whole are called daughters and sisters. Then markē this, that although there bee but one vniuersal church, yet because the same is neuer whole in the world at one time, the whole Church vpon earth is sayde to haue a mother; for shee is but a part of the vniuersall Church. And then further, the Church vpon earth in *Salomons* time did consist of the nation of the Iewes: The Church of the Gentiles was not as then come, which is called her little sister. Thus much may suffice touching this song in Generall, and now let vs come to the words of the Text.

These seuen verses which I haue read vnto you, are first to be diuided into two parts, whereof the one is the generall title or inscription of this whole booke contained in one verse: the other is the first speech of the bride expressed in sixe verses following. As touching the title, it doth shew vnto vs two things: namely

that it is a Song of Songs, and that King *Salomon* did frame it, and write it. The former speech may bee expounded two wayes, as to say, it is all but one song, and yet it containeth in it diuers songs. A song of songs, euen a song that consisteth of diuers songs, that is one way. Or rather after the visuall phrase of the Hebrew tong a song of songs, it is as much as to say, the principall or most excellent song of all others. This title then is giuen to commend vnto vs the worthinelle of it, to the end that we may esteeme of it accordingly: but let vs see how farre the comparison reacheth, that is, with what songs it is compared, whether it bee said to bee the most principall of all the songs, which are in the holy Scriptures, or of those onely which King *Salomon* made: for hee made a thousand and five, 1. King. 4. Now as this word (which) in our English tongue is vsed without difference of number or Gender: so is the word *asher* in the Hebrew tong, that signifieth (which) in our tongue. Then if wee should translate it in the plurall number, and say this, the song of songs which were *Salomons*, the comparison should be but in this manner

ner, this is, the most principal, or the most excellent song of all those thousand and five songs, which were *Salomons*: but if wee take it in the singular number, and say thus: the song of songs, which was *Salomons*, then doth the comparison stand generall, as if hee should say, this song which *Salomon* made, is the chiefe, and the most worthy song of all other, which are set forth in the holy Scripture. And this latter I take to be right.

There are many *Psalmes* and many songs in the sacred Bible, which doe excell all other songs that haue beene in the world, and no one of them, but is very precious: yet this song excelleth them all: for if a man vnderstand it, he shall be forced to confesse that there is not the like sweetnesse and comfort in any song. Seeing then that the Holy Ghost hath thus praysed it vnto vs, let vs giue al diligence to attaine to the true sence and vnderstanding of it, that wee may haue the vse of it to our ioy and comfort, as of a most precious iewell. And when wee reade that it was *Salomons*, wee are not to stay in the man: but wee must consider that he was a Prophet, and so in this worke, but the instru.

instrument and pen of the holy Ghost. It is not the word then of a man (though hee were the wisest man) but the Worde of God, and with such a minde wee are to receyue it. Thus much touching the title or inscription.

Let him kisse mee with the kisses of his mouth, &c. The Bride doth beginne this worthy song, and (as you see) shee crieth out with a wonderfull desire of her loue Christ to haue his presence, and to be embraced of him, and to dwell with him: For all her speech in these sixe verses tendeth to that one thing, sauing that in the fift and sixt verse shee doth take away an obiection which may be made against her namely, that shee is blacke, and therefore nothing meete to be the Spouse of such a one as shee speaketh of. But what? shall we take it then, that the Church doth first seeke after Christ, because shee is first brought in after this vehement manner, crying out to be with him? Doth not the holy Scripture teach the contrary, and say plainly, *Wee loue him, because he loued vs first?* 1. Ioh. 4. verse 19. Yea, and if you marke well her speeches, you may see that it is his loue towards her gone before, which

which draweth her thus earnestly to seeke after him, Shee had felt his loue, and saith it is better then wine: Shee had found the sweetnesse of his graces and heavenly gifts, and therefore (as she confelleth) doth loue him: Hee had let her see what rich treasures hee hath layde vp in store for her, and that enflameth her with a burning desire to bee ioyned with him. And now touching her manner of Phrase, *Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth*: we see that this beginning is according to that Allegorie, vnder which the whole song is written.

True louers which are betrothed, and haue promised marriage each to the other, do with kisses expresse their loue; The Church then being betrothed vnto Christ, vnder this gesture of louers, expresseth her ardent desire of a neerer presence of him her Spouse, that he may embrace her, and giue her yet greater tokens of his loue, yea bee ioyned most neerely vnto her for euer. Where loue is hot, there be great passions in the mind, & the speeches which doe expresse the same, are patheticall. Euen so heere this holy bride, this chaste and pure Virgine, breaketh forth into her speech, with

with an exclamation, which is full of passions, not of naturall passions, but of spirituall loue and zeale, with which shee is inflamed, and euen as it were with an impatience, desireth a nearer coniunction with Christ.

But let vs come yet more neerely into the examination of her words, and more fully to see her affection. You see that she doth vehemently desire not onely to be kissed of her spouse, but also as shee sayeth *With the kisses of his mouth*. Here you must marke well, why shee calleth them the kisses of his mouth; for this is not a superfluous speech. Out of his mouth proceedeth that sacred word, which is the Instrument whereby shee is ioyned vnto him: For by the liuely Oracles hee calleth her, hee lightneth her, hee worketh faith in her, hee armeth her against her enemies, hee feedeth her: yea, to speake briefly, hee conuaineth all his graces, and all good things into her, eue by the same his word. No maruell then though shee bee enflamed with the desire of the kisses of his mouth. From hence it is, that *David* doth so highly commend the holy doctrine of the Lord, that it is perfect, pure & infalli-

infallible, and of such worthy operation and effects in the beleeuers, that he sayth it is more to be desired then gold, yea the much fine gold, sweeter then the honey, or the honey combe, *Psal. 119.* But was the holy Spouse at any time without the Word? for shee seemeth to Erie for that which shee had not.

Christ did kille his beloued Spouse with some kisses of his mouth, euen from the beginning; for hee did betroth himselfe vnto her by his word, his couenant, and promises, euen at the first. But marke how in his holy wisedome hee hath disposed the matter, so as he commeth neerer and neerer, as it were by degrees, euen vnto the full and perfect coniunction. *Adam* and all the holy Fathers before the floud had his Word and Couenant by which he did assure them of his loue and fauour vnto eternall saluation. Hee renewed his promise with *Abraham, Isaac, & Iacob.* And after that the Children of *Israel* were come out of the bondage of *Egypt*, he did more fully deliuer his lawes and ordinances vnto them by *Moses*: but as yet all things were vnder figures and shadows. *Moses* and all the Prophets did

did foreshew, that in the fulnesse of time the Bridegroom himselfe would come in his owne person and fulfill all thinges. Then commeth the cleare light of the Gospell, and this is one of the kisses of his mouth, which she so vehemently desireth. All the Patriarkes, Prophets and holy ones, did wonderfully long to see the Bridegroom manifested in the flesh. And therefore Christ telleth his Disciples saying; *Blessed are the eyes that see that yee see: For I tell you, that many Prophets and Kings haue desired to see these things which you see, and haue not seene them: and to heare those things which you heare, and haue not heard them.* Luk. 10. ver. 24. This is (as I sayd) one of the kisses of his mouth, which the holy Spouse did so vehemently desire. And she did know, that there is yet a neerer kisse of his mouth, & that is, when hee shall say, *Come yee blessed of my Father, inherite the Kingdom, &c.* Math. 25. And for this is now her most earnest desire: For as Saint Iohn witnesseth, *the Spirit and the Bride say, Come,* Reu. 22. 17. At the receyuing of this kisse, she shall be ioined with him for euermore: & therefore she desireth this day aboue all other.

other. Here then we may see, that while this holy Virgine, the Lambes wife is here below vpon the earth, yet her heart is in the heauens, her ioy is with her beloued; vnto whom she desireth to be ioyned. Is this the true Church? What shall we say then of them which are so worldly minded, that they neuer long after these kisses of the Bridegroom? Are their affections set vpon heavenly things, as *S. Paul* requireth? Col. 3. Beloued, Let euery man trie himselfe: If yee feele the desire to be ioyned with Christ by a true and liuely faith, which is ingendred by his word, euen as it were by the kisses of his mouth, and that yee long to bee with him in the heauens, blessed are yee, worldlings haue no such longing.

It followeth, *For thy loue is better then wine*: In these words shee rendreth a reason of that her most vehement desire, which shee hath to be ioyned with him. The summe of it is, that his loue wherewith hee hath loued her first, is so sweete and comfortable, as that it is beyond all comparison: she sayth it is better then wine, and wine is a very precious thing, which is, (as the scripture sayeth)
giuen

giuen to comfort mans heart. *Psal. 104.*
And because wine is as a principall thing
in banquets, it is here put for all the dain-
ty, delicate, sweete and comfortable, or
costly things in the world, which the grea-
test kings doe vse in feastes and banquets:
Sweet and dainty they bee indeede vnto
the carnall man: and while the children
of this world doe seeke very greedily to
fill and stuffe themselves with the same,
reposing their chiefe felicitie and comfort
therein: the holy Spouse sheweth plainely
that shee despiseth these earthly dain-
ties, and that the loue of Christ is sweeter
vnto her then they all. The delicate per-
sons which follow their pleasures, and
haue their fine musicke and their sweete
wines, finde not such delight and comfort
in their banquetting, as shee doth in the
loue of her spouse Iesus Christ. Then
you see how her speech standeth, shee
cryeth out with desire to bee with him,
rendring this reason, that his loue is better
vnto her, then all the sweete and dainetie
things that Princes haue heere in the
world.

How commeth it that this loue of
Christ is so sweete vnto her? or as shee
spea

speakeſh in the plurall number, thy loues, becauſe his loue is the principall of all. It is fro hence, that ſhe knoweth he would giue himſelfe for her, that hee might ſanctiſie her, and clenſe her by the waſhing of water through the Word, that he might make her vnto himſelfe a glorious Church, not hauing ſpot or wrinkle, &c. Eph. 5. ver. 25. 26. 27. The whole number of the Elect were in themſelues, ynder the thraldome of ſinne and condemnation, and ſhould all haue gone to hell, but that as Saint *Iohn* ſayeth, hee loued vs, and waſhed vs from our ſins in his blood, and made vs Kings and Priests to God his Father, Reu. 1. ver. 5. 6. Is not here a ſweet loue, which is better (as ſhe ſayeth) then wine? This loue did *Moses* feeſe through faith, and it cauſed him to reſuſe to bee called the ſonne of Pharaohs daughter, & choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, then to enioy the pleaſures of ſinne for a ſeaſon, eſteeming the rebuke of Chriſt greater riches, then the treaſures of Egypt, Heb. 11. This loue did Saint Paul (who before was a blaſphemer and a perſecutor) feeſe the ſweetneſſe of it, and it cauſed him, as a man
C cruci.

crucified to the world, to despise al earthly treasures; and to say, I desire to bee dissolued and to be with Christ.

Wee reade of a woman in the Gospel which washed the feet of our Lord with teares, and wiped them with the hayres of her head, she loued much, for in the abundance of his loue, shee felt that hee had forgiuen her many sinnes. And doubtlesse, euery soule which through a true and liuely faith doth apprehend the forgiuenesse of sinnes in his blood, cryeth out, *Let him kisse mee with the kisses of his mouth, for thy loue is better then wine.*

It followeth, *Because of the saour of thy good ointments, thy name is as an ointment powred out, therefore the virgins doe loue thee.* In this verse she rendreth a reason, why her hart is so set vpon him, and why shee doth so loue him, that in comparison of him shee renounceth all the glory and riches, and pleasures of this world, vtterly despising them as drosse and vanity. Her reason is drawne from the excellency of her beloued: that he is full of sweet things by which hee doth perfume her, and so maketh her sweet also. For that which
giueth

giueth the sweetest fauour, maketh a man to couet most after it. Her speech where- with she setteth forth the commendation of his sweetnesse, is framed according to the figures of the Law. God commanded *Moses* to make a precious ointment and therewith to annoint the tabernacle and the ministring vessels, also *Aaron* & his sonnes, *Exod. 30.* And as it is in *Psa.* 133.

This ointment was powred vpon the head of *Aaron*, and went downe to the skirts of his cloathing. Hereby was figured the annointing of the Sonne of God, our Lord *Iesus* with the holy Ghost, according as it is written, *The spirit of the Lord is vpon me, because hee hath annointed mee, Esa 61.* He is therefore Christ, euen the Lords annointed, he in our nature, that is in the Manhood, as the head ouer the whole church, hath receyued the fulnesse of all graces, as it is written, that God gaue not the spirit to him by measure, *Ioh. 3. v. 34.* And that it pleased the Father, that in him all fulnes should dwel, *Col. 1. 19.* Here is then the vessell, which as the rich treasure is full of all heauenly and most sweet graces, euen the man

Jesus Christ. But marke how the Bride doth proceed further in this matter, If a sweete oyntment be closed vp in a vessell it remaineth sweet within it selfe, and within the vessell, the saour of it is little felt to those that come neare it, but when it is powred forth, then the sweetnesse thereof doth spread and perfume all. Wee reade in the Gospell of a woman which had a boxe of very costly ointment of spikenard, and she brake the boxe, & poured the ointment vpon the head of Iesus as he sate at table, Marke 14. ver. 3. and the house was filled with the saour of the ointment, Iohn 12. ver. 3. So marke how shee speaketh here, *As the saour of thy good ointments, thy name is as an ointment powred out:* Or by this shee sheweth, that the Bridegroom her welbeloued doth not as a close vessell keepe in to himselfe those sweet graces wherewith he is annointed, but that they are in deede powred forth vpon her, to annoint her, & to make her sweete also. The graces of Christ which are here called his sweete ointments; are powred forth indeed, and doe flowe from him the head into all parts of his mysticall body, that is to say, vpon
all

all the members of his Church, which being made partakers of his anointing, are called Christians: as it is written, Of his fulnesse wee all receyue, euen grace for grace, Ioh. 1. ver. 16. But marke now how his name is an ointment powred foorth: He fulfilled all righteousnes, Math. 3 ver. 15. He offered himselfe by his eternall spirit without spot vnto God, Heb. 9. ver. 14. He hath by his sacrifice of himselfe, euen by the bloud of his Crosse, appeased the wrath of his Father, and made reconciliation for the sins of the world: He doth cloath al his Elect with his own holinesse, he doth slay sinne in them, and replenisheth them with the vertues and graces of his spirite, thus is his name as a precious ointment powred out. And therefore (sayth she) the Virgins do loue thee.

When Christ crucified is preached, when the vertue and power of his death and resurrection are shewed, when all his graces are displayed, and layde open, then is, as it were, the boxe of the good oyntments broken, and his name is as an ointment powred foorth, then is there a most sweet saour, which causeth the Virgines

to loue him. Thus you see that the sweetnes of his graces and heavenly gifis powdered forth vpon her, haue enflamed her heart with this vehement loue and desire to bee with him. Al men are by nature vncleane, filthy, stinking and loathsome but all doe not so well perceyue it, onely the regenerate doe come to the true sense of the loathsome sauiour of their sinnes, & feele that they are made sweet by his sweet oyntments, and these are they that doe loue him.

But how is this? that shee sayeth Virgins doe loue him? Is there any other virgin that doth loue Christ besides her self? Is not she alone his Spouse, and the onely chaste and pure one? Who then bee these virgins that she speaketh of? They be her daughters, they be her companions, they be her selfe: for though she bee but one, if we respect the whole body, yet because shee consisteth of many, euen of all the elect, shee speaketh also of her selfe as of many. She is a chaste virgin, and every faithful soule is a chaste virgin vnto Christ. Saint *Paul* sayth, he was ialous ouer the Church of Corinth with a godly ialousie: for I haue (sayth hee) coupled you

to one man, to present you a chaste virgin
vnto Christ, 2. Cor. 11. ver. 2. These vir-
gins bee all the chaste worshippers of God
Reu. 14. ver. 4. These onely doe smell
the sweete saour of Christ. The world-
lings whom the Scripture calleth adulte-
rers and adulteresses, Iam. 4. ver. 4. be-
cause they doe by giuing their heart to
the world, euen to vncleane lusts of the
flesh, commit spirituall whoredome a-
gainst God, are drowned and ouerwhel-
med in the stinke of filthy vncleannesse,
and cannot smell the sweet ointments of
Christ: and therefore they doe not, nor
cannot loue him.

In the next verse she sayeth, *Draw me,
wee wil runne after thee: the King hath
brought mee into his Chambers, wee will bee
glad and reioyce in thee, wee will remember
thy loue more then wine, the righteous doe
loue thee.* Here she vttereth still her ve-
hement affections, and desire to bee with
her Christ, in diuers speeches, which wee
will handle briefly as they lie. Wee haue
seene by her former speeches, that by his
loue towards her, and by the sweetenesse
of his graces powred forth vpon her, shee
is so inflamed wih loue of him, and with
C 4 the

the desire of being ioyned vnto him, that in heart and mind, and affection shee mounteth vp aboue the heauens, despising all things here below vnder the sun, cyther riches, pleasures or glory, as meere trash and vanity. Her bridegroom is farre beyond them all in price and dignity, hee is her onely treasure and ioy: this (I say) we haue scene by her speech, and now is it come to this, that shee sayeth: *Draw mee, wee will runne after thee?* Alas good virgin, hath shee so great a desire to runne after him, her only ioy in whom shee knoweth is all felicity, and doe not her legs serue? Doth her strength fayle? or doth shee faint in the race? Doth shee desire most vehemently, and yet cannot performe? Yea verily it is euen so. This is her estate. Shee doth plainly confesse her frailty, and the feeblenes of her knees, that shee cannot runne after him, except he draw her. What should bee the reason of this? Surely her race is vpward, and she hath a burden vpon her that presseth her downe: yea all the virgins, all her daughters, all her companions haue their load vpon them.

Though they loue Christ, yet they
can-

cannot continue their race after him any faster then hee shall draw them. If hee cease drawing, they giue ouer running: If you will demaund what it is which doth so burden and presse down, so clog and hamper the feet, and make the knees so feeble: The holy Ghost doth tell you, if you will reade, Heb. 12. ver. 3. The spirit and grace of God doth draw, but the corruption of our nature in euery one doth euen strue to quench the Spirit: Therefore the holy Apostle sayeth, the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, so that you cannot do what you would, Gal. 5.

The same doctrine hee teacheth, Romaines 7. And Christ Iesus sayde to his Apostles: *The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weake*, Math. 26. ver. 41. And no man (sayth he) commeth vnto mee, except the Father that sent me, doe draw him, Io. 6. Marke well this Prayer of the holy spouse: fortherby you may see plainly how contrary shee is to that bolde and impudent strumpet, the Whore of Babel, even that idolatrous Church of Rome, which maintaineth with sharpe arguments, ouen with fire and sworde, that men haue free Will and power
of

of themselves, being once assisted by grace, to runne vnto Christ.

The filthy harlot condemneth this holy virgin of heresie, because shee will not herein ioyne with her. Indeed, that wicked whore sayth, that mans will is so enfeebled, that without grace it can doe nothing, but preuented, and holpen, and as it were, set on foote by grace, shee sayth, it can and doth performe all things. Marke (I say) how the Bride doth heere gaine say her: for shee had receyued grace shee had runne, and doth runne, and craueth his graces that shee may runne still, yea, and that shee may runne faster, and runne to the end. It is not then (brethren) as those false spirits do beare men in hand that man is but maimed and halfe dead, and being set vp, and supported by grace, can runne then of himselfe. Nay, there must be grace vpon grace, still euen to the end. Hereupon the faithfull soules feeling how they bee still euen yoaked with the remnants of sinne, and crying day and night vnto the Lord Iesus to quicken the and to strengthen them, and to draw the by his liuely word and holy spirite; that they may runne after him, do farre differ
from

those proud hypocrites which glory in themselves, that they can runne, and can doe what they lust.

It followeth, *The King brought mee into his chambers, &c.* The words which follow, doe shew that this clause should rather bee translated thus: When the king shall bring mee into his Chambers: for shee speaketh of a ioy and gladnes which shall follow thereupon. This is out of doubt, that hee had before this time brought her into his chambers: for shee speaketh of a thing with which shee was not vnacquainted. For such here among men that did betroth themselves, doe willingly make known vnto them, to whom they are betrothed, what riches, and treasures they haue in store for them to possesse when they shall come to be their wiues: So our Lord Iesus Christ, hauing betrothed himselfe vnto his Church, had from time to time, euen from the beginning led her into his chambers, and shewed her what treasures, riches and glory hee hath layd vp for her in the heauens Kings haue the greatest treasures vppon earth, and the richest ornaments in their chambers: This King that she speaketh of, is
the

the greatest of all Kings, and all the riches of the Kings of this World, are but drolle in comparison of those which he hath layde vp, and reserueth in the heavenly mansions for his beloued Spouse.

True it is, that she hath had but a glimmering of them, and therefore still coueteth to see them more fully: & her bridegroom hath opened them vnto her more fully at some time then at other. He ledde her into the chambers in the time of the Law, and opened his treasures vnto her, to shew her the riches and glory of his kingdome, which she shall inherite with him: but this he hath done more fully vnder the Gospell, since he was manifested in the flesh, and most fully it shall bee done at the day of the marriage, when he shall receiue her home vnto him to dwell with him in the heauens for euer. But here it may be demaunded, how hee leadeth her into his chambers, that is, into the heauens, while she is yet in the earth? You must vnderstand that this leading is spirituall; hee doth giue vnto her an eye of faith, by which she beholdeth the inuisible heauenly riches and treasures of life.

life. His word layeth them open, and his spirit giueth the sight, as the holy Apostle sayth: *The eye hath not seene, and the eare hath not heard, neyther haue entred into the hart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that loue him, but God hath reuealed them vnto vs by his spirite,* 1. Cor: 2.9.10. you see then that it is the holy spirit, by which the Bridegroom leadeth the Bride into his chamber, to shew what thinges hee hath prepared for her, which spirit dealeth not without the word. Then behold what is added, *We wil reioyce and be glad in thee, &c.* Here is spiritual ioy, here is mirth and gladnesse which followeth vpon the sight of the heavenly treasures. Take a virgin which is betrothed vnto some great Prince, and lead her into his chambers, and shew vnto her all his rich ornaments and glory, assuring her, that all is kept for her, will it not make her to reioyce, and be glad? will not her mind be much affected with the loue of such a husband? This virgin is ledde into the heavenly chambers, and there is shewed vnto her the glory and the riches of the Life to come, which shee shall keepe and possesse: how is it
pos,

possible then, but that she should be euen replenished with ioy and gladnesse? How can it be otherwise, but that shee shal mention his loue (as she saith) more then wine? Is there any thing in this world, which will not seeme vile vnto her in comparison? Yea, will not shee (that is to say, euen all the righteous) loue him, magnific him, extoll and prayse him, and his loue? Some of the children of this world, when the Gospell is preached, are a little lightened, and doe as it were, peepe in at the doores of these Chambers of the Bridegroom, and haue a little dimme sight of the riches and glory, and are a little moued therewith for the time vnto ioy and gladnesse: but the pleasures and cares of this world, which are deeply seated in their heartes, doe put out all again. Their faith, their hope, and their ioy in heauenly things doe vanish, and they lay hold of things transitory.

Beloued, let vs take heede that wee be not such, let vs not in our vncleannes stand without to peepe in at the doores, and away; but let vs endeauour to bee of these pure virgins, and so with our holy mother be led into the chambers, that wee may

may thoroughly view the heavenly treasures layde vp, and bee assured that they be kept for vs, and so reioyce, (as *S. Peter* sayeth) *with joy unspeakable and glorious:* 1. *Pet.* 1. vers. 4. 5. 8. for then shall wee mention his loue more then wine, then shall we despise all things here below, and we shall loue him. Well let vs come now vnto her next speech.

I am blacke, O daughters of Iernsalem, but comely, &c. Now shee cometh to take away the obiection, which may bee made against her after this manner. It falleth out sometimes, that some doe loue them, which doe not loue them againe. Thou art wrapt with a vehement loue, but is not towards such a one as careth not for thee? for thou settest him forth to be a glorious king, so rich, and so full of sweet things, as that nothing vnder heauen is any thing comparable vnto him. Thou art not fit to bee the wife of such an one: how should he loue thee? for thou art blacke. Is it not meete that so goodly a king should haue a right beautifull Queene? How can shee answer this? She doth answer it fully. First, confessing that shee is blacke indeed. I know that I

am blacke, but yet withall I am comely:
 I am well fauoured. Then shee vseth two
 comparisons: the one to shew her blacke-
 nesse, the other to set forth her comelines.
 Touching the first comparison, our trans-
 lation sayth, *As the fruits of Kedar*: but
 the words are, *As the tents of Kedar*. They
 were men which in hote countries kept
 cattell, and remouing from place to place,
 dwelt in bootes and tents. The other
 comparison is in these words, *As the cur-
 tains or the hangings of Salomon*. Now wee
 must know that in both these there is a fi-
 guratiue speech: for by the tents and the
 curtaines are vnderstood those that dwell
 in them. As if shee should say, I am blacke
 indeed, as the men in the tents of Kedar,
 which are sunne-burnt; but yet I am com-
 ly, as they that dwell in the Court of Sa-
 lomon: For these curtaines are all the
 hangings, yea by them is vnderstood all
 the whole glory of Salomons Court: Wee
 reade in the holy Scriptures, that there was
 no glory in the world comparable to the
 glory of King Salomon.

The Queene of *Taba* was astonished
 when shee beheld it. If the spiritual com-
 lineesse and beauty of the Spouse of Christ,

now

now in the time of her frailty and imperfection, bee comparable with *Salomon* in al his royalty, yea do exceed him: what shal her beauty bee, when all her blacknes shall bee taken away, and Christ shall wash her, and make her a glorious church, not hauing spotte or blemish, *Eph. 5.*

But now where as shee confelleth that shee is blacke, is it not some cause to empayre her dignity, or may shee not iustly for the same bee the lesse esteemed? No for shee doth answere to that, shewing that her blacknesse is not natieue, it is not according to her spirituall birth, it is accidentary, it is but for a time, shee is but sunne burnt: *Looke not vpon mee* (sayeth shee) *that I am somewhat blacke, for the sunne hath shined vpon me.*

A notable place to teach vs to take heede how we esteeme the Church of Christ: for many haue despised her, reproached and forsaken her, because she is blacke. It hath been their viter destruction, that they could not looke into her inward beauty, and put a difference betweene her present estate of frailty and imperfection, & that perfect beauty vnto which shee shall come. This admonition

D

which

which shee giueth, is right necessary at all times for her weake daughters, least they be offended, and forsake her for her blacknes; but there is then an other question ariseth: why should shee be Sunne burnt? If shee bee so great a Queene, the darling of a most high and glorious king, what occasion hath shee to empayre her beauty? To this she answereth, that it is a cruell violence, and a spitefull iniury offered vnto her, and that by such as of all other ought least so to deale with her. Shee vseth this similitude, as if a young beautifull virgin dwelling in her mothers house had churlish and rough fellowes to her brethren, who in anger thrust her out at doores to keepe the vines, and so shee is compelled to bee in the sunne, and to bee sunne burnt. And so shee sayeth, *That her mothers sonnes were angry with her, and made her the Keeper of the vines.* It is a most cleare case that the holy Church, and all her perfectest children doe want of the perfect beauty while they liue here, and are somewhat blacke, partly through finnes, which doe remaine in them, and partly through afflictions. I neede not stand to proue this, being a matter so euident.

dent. But herein is some difficulty, who they bee whom shee calleth her mothers sonnes. Some haue taken it that shee calleth originall sinne, even all the concupiscences of the flesh, which are in all the elect from the wombe, her mothers sons: for by these shee is forced to commit many sinnes which dimme her beauty, and to omit the doing her duty in part for her owne vine, shee sayth shee did not keepe, wherein the true beauty consisteth. All this is true, and according to that which Saint *Paul* speaketh of himselfe, *Rom. 7.*

But I doe not see how concupiscences can be called the sonnes of her mother, for in this song she calleth the church that was of former time her mother. Shee doth not (as I take it) speake of any mother but one. I take it therefore rather, that shee calleth the degenerate children her mothers sonnes. They bee borne in the Church, they bee descended of the holy ones, they bee by outward profession the children of the true Church: but shee calleth them not the sonnes of God, nor yet her brethren, for they bee very bastards and degenerate children:

Such were the wicked Priests and false Prophets in the time of the Law, such haue beene all the Heretikes, popish Prelates, and sects of idolatrous and superstitious orders vnder the Gospell, All these haue arrogantly challenged to themselves the honour and dignity of Gods church, and with wrath and fury haue offered violence vnto the true spouse of Christ, wherof shee here complaineth,

It would be a matter ouer long and tedious for me to rehearse what persecutions and afflictions these haue layde vpon the Church, and what desolations and deformities they haue brought vpon her: True it is, that God by these hath afflicted and chastised his chosen people for their sinnes. Then wee see why shee is somewhat blacke, and it standeth vs vpon that wee take heede wee despise her not for the same. Howsoeuer she seemeth to the eyes of the world, to bee base and farre vnmeet for such a bridegroom, yet is shee beautifull in his eyes, and hee will rid her, and set her free from all infirmities, & from the violence of her cruell foes, he will make her to shine in perfect beauty and glory, yea shee shall be bright as the sunne
in

in the firmament.

Now she turneth her speech again vnto her beloued (that it may appeare hee regardeth her) praying most earnestly vnto him, that hee will shew her where hee feedeth, and where hee causeth his flocke to lye downe at noone (for so the words are to be translated) shewing that if hee doe not, it would not be for his honour, nor for her good. For the sense of this, first you know that Christ is the great shepheard, and therefore the church on earth seeketh onely after him to bee fedde: For when shee calleth vpon him to shew her where hee feedeth his sheepe, it is to this end, that hee will feed her as hee fed the flockes of former times, for she knoweth that there is but one true shepheard, who feedeth all his sheepe with the same pasture: shee looketh for no wholesome foode vnlesse it bee with the auncient Churches. Then next, it was the manner of the shepheards in those hote Countries to diue their sheepe in the heate of the day, vnto a place of shadow where they might lye downe, and refresh them in that time of the parching heate. The bride craueth instantly of him whom

shee loueth most entirely, that hee will shew vnto her the place where hee causeth his flocke to lye downe at noone. The summe of her request is, that he will not onely as her great shepheard, feede her with his wholesome food of life, but also that he will refresh her, as it were in the shadow, when the Sunne shineth hottest, that is, when persecutions, be the greatest. For by the parching heate of the sunne, is meant the heate of persecution as our Saviour teacheth, Math. 13. A most worthy place to be noted, that the true Church doth not onely depend vpon Christ Iesus alone for her foode, reiecting all doctrines of men, but also is in the midst of the hottest persecutions, refreshed by him. When tyrants doe rage, you would thinke that the poore Church was neglected of him, as most wretched, and most miserable: but it is nothing so: for euen then doth he refresh her in his comfortable shadow: for the faithfull receyuing the comforter whom hee sendeth, *Iohn 16.* Doe reioyce in afflictions, *Rom. 5. ver. 3.* And when they haue trouble in the world, they haue peace in Christ, *Iohn 16. vers. 33.* Behold the wonderfull power

power of the Lord, vnto those whom hee feedeth.

Men are afraide to professe the gospel, because of the cruell persecutors, and so they do account it a safety to flye from Christ: the holy Church is contrary, she doth not seeke, how shee may deale covertly, and so auoyde perill, but openly approacheth vnto Christ, knowing that hee can, and will refresh her, euen when the Sunne shineth hottest. Let vs then seeke with our mother, and cleaue vnto Christ, for hee hath a layer, at noone hee will refresh vs, and make vs in him to lie downe in peace, euen in the midst of the burning flames. All the holy Martyrs which suffered for the Gospel doe testifie these things: Why should we then bee afraide? Then touching the reason, which shee addeth, that if hee doo not shew her where hee feedeth, and also refresh her in the heate, such is her frailty. that shee shall decline and ioyne with false Worshippers; and that would not be to his honour, nor to her good. *Why* (sayth shee) *should I bee as one that turneth aside to the flockes of thy companions? or as it may well bee translated, as one that*

pitcheth or spreadeth her Tent by the flockes of thy companions. That the faithfull doe worshippe God aright in spirite and truth: *Iohn 4.* and doe not ioyne with idolaters, they haue it not of themselves, but from hence, that they be all taught of God, *Iohn 6. verse 45.* But if shee speake heere of idolatrous flockes, vnto whome shee shall turne, if Christ do not teach her, then the Masters of false worshippe are called the companions of Christ, is not that a dignity ouer great for such wicked men? for answere vnto this, wee must note that shee doth not call them, so giuing vnto them thereby any dignity, but rather noting thereby what wicked vsurpers they be. For Christ is the onely Master, the onely shepheard, the onely Teacher of the true worshippe of God: and all such as set vp a worshippe and a doctrine of their owne, aduance themselves euen to be his companions. Such a companion is the Pope, for hee doth take vpon him to frame a Religion, and standeth to maintaine that it is of equall authority with the religion of Christ.

But wee are taught heereto seeke vn-

to

Song of Salomon. 41

to the Lord Iesus, that hee may shewe
vnto vs where he feedeth his flocke, that
wee may ioyne with the same, and bee
fedde by him, and so kept, that we
decline not to the flockes of
such companions. The
Lord giue vs that
grace, Amen.
Let vs
pray.



THE



The second Sermon.

CHAP. I.

8 If thou know not, O thou sayrest among women, get thee forth by the steps of the flocke and feede thy Kids by the tents of the sheeps sheards.

9 I haue compared thee my laue, vnto the troupe of horses in the Chariots of Pharaoh.

10 Thy cheekes are comely with rowes of stones, and thy necke with chaines.

11 Wee will make thee borders of golde, with studs of siluer.

12 While the King was at his repast, my spikenard gaue the smell thereof.

13 My welbeloued is as a bundle of myrrhe vnto mee, hee shall lodge betwene my breasts.

14 My welbeloued is as a cluster of Camphire vnto mee in the vines of Engedie.

15 My loue, behold, thou art fayre, behold thou art fayre, thine eyes are like the doves.

16 My

16 *My welbeloned, behold thou art fayre
and pleasant, also our bed is greene.*

17 *The beames of our house are Cedars,
the rafters are of Firrh.*



He speeches of the
bride seeking after her
welbeloued, are past
in the former part of
this chapter; and now
wee shall heare what
the Bridegroome say-
eth, for he answereth

in foure verses, and then each doth com-
mend the other by course. Her last re-
quest which she made vnto him was this:
that *Hee would shew her where hee feedeth:
and where hee causeth the flocke to lye downe
at noone.* And vnto this hee doth frame
his first speech in most kind and louing
manner, thus: *If thou know not (sayth he)
O thou fayrest among women.* The verie
forme of his speech dooth seeme to im-
port thus much: That it is a straunge
thing, that she doth not know where hee
feedeth his flocke: for hath hee not from
the beginning fedde his Church, so as the
church

church hath knowne how and where he hath fed her? yes doubtlesse, but yet the false teachers haue oftentimes so preuailed and haue so confidently challenged to themselues the name and title of the true Church, and the true knowledge hath beene oftentimes so darkened, that the poore sheepe of Christ haue not knowne almost which way to turne them, beeing in danger of ioyning themselues to the flockes of those companions, but that they haue had their refuge in flying vnto Christ to be taught the truth by him. Partly indeed (as it cannot be denyed) by negligence those things come to passe: but Christ doth not vpbraide her with that, but doth very readily instruct her, as wee shall see in that which followeth. Then further that he calleth her, *The sayrest among women*, you may see how beautifull and comely shee is in his sight. Howsoeuer shee seemeth in her owne eyes to be blacke (as all the faithfull are priuy to their owne deformities) and howsoeuer others doe despise her while they doe esteeme her to bee voyde of beauty: yet vnto Christ shee is the sayrest of all other. Great flockes there haue beene in the World

World of sundry professions, and goodly glory, and externall ornaments they haue beene decked withall: but theyr beauty in the eyes of the Lord is nothing comparable to the beauty of his Spouse, who is base in outward shew, but yet by her spirituall ornaments shee excelleth them all, so that hee calleth her *The sayrest among women.*

This is a wonderfull comfort vnto euery faithfull soule, when the Diuell in time of temptation shall suggest after this manner: Thou art spotted and defiled with many sinnes and offences: thou art foule, thou art blacke, thou art deformed: how should the most holy and glorious Lord Iesus delight in thee? Consider thy selfe, what reason hast thou to thinke that thou shalt bee married vnto him? Yea what should perswade thee, that hee regardeth thy prayers? that the voyce of Christ is this: *O thou sayrest among women.* What would ye haue more? whē we are so full of deformities, yet sayre in his eyes. But how then? is that which is blacke fair in the eyes of Christ? No verily, for he cā approue nothing that is vnclean, but he beholdeth the beauty of his spouse, so far as she

is regenerate & decked with vertues: and as for her blacknes and deformities, they shall be wholly taken away. So hee beholdeth her iustified and sanctified in himselfe.

And thus much touching his kinde speech: and now let vs see what answer he maketh vnto her request. Shee doth entreate him of all loue to shew her where he feedeth his flocke, that she may ioyne her selfe there to be fed with them, vnder him, and by him her onely shepheard. And marke what hee biddeth her doe, that she may obtaine her desire heerein. *Goe forth (sayde he) by the steps of the flocke, and feede thy kiddes by the Tents of the shepheard.* Is this the way to finde him where hee feedeth, and where hee causeth his flocke to lye downe at noone? Is this a sufficient answer to her request: yes doubtlesse: Christ answereth her desire to the full: Let vs therefore consider the sense of his words: for they instruct vs in a most weighty matter Some doe translate them thus: *Seeing thou knowest not, O thou sayrest among women, get forth, stay not in the footsteppes of that flocke, and feede thy Kids about the tents of other shep-*

shepherds. As if he should will her to come away from those flockes of his companions, as shee called them, and not walke in their wayes: for albeit they in their blinde deuotion pretend to worshippe God, yet indeed they worshippe Diuels. And seeing the doctrines and religions of those companions bee from mans inuention, and so are of the earth here below, yea euen from the pit of hell: shee must feede her kids about the tentes of those other shepherds, she must lead them into the heauenly pastures.

This is a godly sense, but I doe not see how the wordes will beare it in this place. Indeed the preposition *gnal* signifieth indifferently, aboute, vpon, or beside, as to say, about the tents, or besides the tents. But in the other words there is a very eclipse, when the words are plainly set downe thus, *Goe forth in the steppes of the flocke*, to say, *Goe forth, stay not, or walke not in the steppes of the flocke*. And moreouer we are to note that in her vehement suite vnto Christ, hee would shew her where hee feedeth: shee sayth: *Why should I bee as one that turneth aside to the flockes of thy companions?* Shee sayth not to the

the flocke. The false worshippers be many flockes, and so shee calleth them: for they differ in their Religion each from other.

If Christ then had spoken of those, he would haue called them flockes, as shee did, and not a flocke. Hee would haue sayd, Goe forth, Walke not in the steppes of those flockes which thou speakest of. The true Church indeede consisteth of many seuerall flockes, if we respect the diuersity of times and places: but if we respect the vnity of their faith, and how they be made one mystical body of Christ they bee all but one flocke. Againe wee finde in the holy Scriptures that Hypocrites and counterfeyte worshippers are called Goates; yea, they be euen heardes of swine, or rather of Wolues, and such like cruell beasts, we finde them not called sheepe, as the Lords people are called his sheepe.

Now in this place the words do stand thus: Go forth in the steps of the sheepe. I take it therefore very cleere, that hee speaketh of the people of God, saying *Goe forth in the steps of the sheepe*. If thou wilt finde mee where I doe feede my sheepe,
that

that thou mayest ioyne with them to become one flocke, goe forth in their steps, and feede thy Kids by the tents of the shepheards.

Here is the way for all the faithfull to finde where the great shepheard of the sheepe, our Lord Iesus feedeth his flocke: then let vs consider diligently of it, that wee may follow his direction. It is the Church which maketh her prayer, that he would shew vnto her where he feedeth. What flocke doth hee feede besides the Church? Is not shee his onely flocke? What other sheepe then are those whose steps shee must trace to finde where hee feedeth? Indeede the Church is but one, and Christ feedeth none other flocke besides her: but you must obserue that this is the prayer of the Church euer vpon earth: *Shew mee, O thou whom my soule loueth, where thou feedest.* And there be which were vpon earth in former time. which are gone out of the World. These are the sheepe in whose steps hee willett her to goe forth, and by the steppes of these shee shall come to finde where the wholesome pasture is.

The case standeth thus: There is

E

but

but one true faith, one holy Religion, & worship of God, one pure doctrine, one spirituall food or pasture for all that come to life.

Although it hath not beene deuiered at all times alike, or vnder one forme: for Fathers vnder the Law had all vnder figures and shadowes, which the Gospell layeth open clearely. Hereupon it followeth, that when there arise Sectmasters, Heretikes and false teachers, which draw flocks of Disciples after them, and each company boasteth that they bee the true Church, and now! the faithfull in the midst of these confusions, crie out vnto Christ, to shew them where he doth feed: his pirection is this: Goe forth in the steps of the sheepe, looke into the wayes of the ancient Churches, looke what doctrine, and what religion they professed, looke what shepheards fedde them, ioyn your selues to the tents of the same shephearps, and feede in the same pasture. Here then bee two things chiefly to be considered: which also must not be parted a sunder, the steps of the sheepe, and the tents of the shepheards: for there is a great controuersie betweene vs, and the Rowish church:
They

They call vs Schifmatikes, and we stand to maintaine that they be the Synagogue of Antichrist, the great whore of Babel, the mother of whoredomes and abominations of the earth, an idolatrous strumpet. To the triall we come, they crye out for the steps of the auncient flockes, and the tents of the ancient shepherds that fedde them, and so doe we.

Herein we do consent: but yet when wee come to the point, we differ as far as light and darknesse: For whereas wee looke vnto the steps of *Abraham, Isaack,* and *Jacob*, and other holy men, whom the Scripture commendeth, wee looke vnto the faith, the doctrine and the religion of *Moses* and the Prophets, yea of the Apostles and Martyres of Christ Iesus; wee looke how they worshipped, and how they liued, as the sacred Histories of the Bible doe set forth vnto vs: for if the word of God did not testifie of them, how should wee know their steppes to bee the steps of Christs flock? Also we looke who were the shepherds vnder Christ in auncient time, euen the Prophets and the Apostles, wee looke vnto their tents, and by them wee seeke for pasture. Wee

E 2 looke

looke only vnto the written word which is deliuered vnto vs from God by them: for their writings are as the shepherdes tents erected, and there only is the wholesome foode, there bee the greene pastures there wee ioyne our selues vnto the true sheepe of Christ: This is our course, as Christ here willeth. The Papist will none of this: but they will let passe the steps of *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*, of the Patriarkes and Prophets of the Apostles, and other holy men, of whom the Word of God beareth witnesse: they will not allow that the writings of the Prophets and Apostles shall bee the tents of these shepherds, of whom Christ speaketh, they hold not that to be the onely wholesome pasture, with which they feede Gods people. And they will haue men looke to the steps of certaine Popes, Cardinals, Monks, Fryers, & a deale of such vermine which for the space of some fīue or sixe hundred yeares hath crawled vppon the earth. They send vs to the decrees of Popes and Popish Prelates, and to their owne constitutions, there will they haue the tents of the shepherds to be, and the wholesome pastures. What a blindenesse

is it in all those which can not see that these be very theeves & murtherers? For when Christ willeth vs to go forth by the steps of the sheepe, & to feede by the tents of the shepherds, what sheepe meaneth he, but those whom he hath giuen testimony vnto by his word, that they were his faithfull worshippers? Where shall wee seeke the Church but in the holy Scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets? When hee speaketh of the tents of the shepherdes, which fed and guyded those auncient flockes, whom shall wee take them to be but onely those whom hee hath declared to bee his seruants? euen the holy Apostles and Prophets? Then marke these Popish seducers. They teach many strange doctrines, contrary to the doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets, euen doctrines of Diuels;

They worship Idols, and haue a thousand superstitions: and when they should proue the that me may come to ioyne with the ancient people of God, and to feede by the tents of those faithfull shepherds: they stand by the way side, & tel men that they will proue their doctrine & worship by ancient shepherds and steps of the

sheepe, and leade them vnto by-lanes vnto their owne Companies, and murther them: For they haue nothing to proue their doctrine and worship but their own authority. Such a Pope, so many Cardinals and Bishops did decree this, and that they cannot erre, therefore wee must beleue it. Heere is all their prooffe. But let vs leaue these wicked companions, and hearken againe what Christ sayeth now further vnto his beloued Spouse.

Wee haue seene how vehement her desire is in seeking after him, and now he sheweth how much the same pleaseth him for the commendation which hee giueth vnto her, is drawne from thence. But see now vnder what comparifon he praiseth her. *I haue likened thee my Lowe* (sayeth he) *unto the troupe of horses, which is in the Chariots of Pharaoh. Thy cheekes are comely with rowes of stones, and thy necke with chaines.* A troupe of horses, beeing the horses also of a mighty King, and furnished for the wars, decked with rowes of precious stones vpon their cheekes, as the manner of the Egyptians, and other countries was, and chaines of golde about their neckes, was a very goodly sight, now

vnto those hee compareth his Spouse, with her spirituall decking and ornaments, as it were rowes of goodly precious stones and chaines.

Bur further, you must note, that the troupe of horses in the Chariots of *Pharaoh* were strong, cheerefull, prompt, and ready to the war; and herein the Church is compared vnto them. It may be said is this holy virgin as a troupe of horses to the warre? or is she for warre? Yea, she is called the Church militant, that is the Church warring. The enemies against whom shee warreth are mighty. They be principalities and powers, they bee the rulers of the darkenes of this world. Her warre is against all the Diuels of Hell; shee seeketh vnto Christ, and hee hath armed her with spirituall armour to vanquish them all. Vnto this battell shee is prepared, shee is adorned, she is prompt and ready, shee is full of fortitude and valour; the troupe of horses in the chariots of King *Pharaoh*, are not comparable vnto her.

They be strong and swift, and ready to the battell, but they be but flesh. They be decked and set forth with rowes of preci-

ous stones vpon their cheekes, and with gold chaines about their neckes, these bee things corruptible. Her strength is spirituall, and against spirituall enemies: her ornaments which are likened vnto rowes of precious stones, be also spirituall. And she is commended for her fortitude which he hath armed her withall, euen that armour of God, as *Saint Paul* calleth it, *Ephes. 6*. We see then that all that long after the Lord Iesus, loose not their labour in seeking vnto him: for he decketh them with heauenly ornaments, maketh them valiant and strong in his owne power to fight, and to preuayle against the mightiest enemies, euen the Diuels of hell. Let this stirre vs vp to seeke after him continually. He is our strength and fortitude, hee is our refuge and defence, through him, as *Saint Paul* sayeth, we are more then conquerours. And vsing the graces and gifts well which he bestoweth vpon vs, wee shall receyue more: for marke what hee promiseth in the words that follow, *Wee will make thee borders of golde with studdes of siluer.*

You see that these words are a promise and indeed as it is manifest, a promise of fur-

further rich ornaments. She is richly decked already, but her decking shall bee yet more. She shall haue the most excellent ornaments of golde and silver, which wrought together doe set forth each other. Indeed by these, the heauenly graces of the holy Ghost are signified. But who are they which shall make and put vpon her these goodly iewels? for hee sayth not I will make thee, but *Wee will make thee borders of golde, with studs of silver.* Who are they whom the Bridegroome here ioi- neth with himselfe in this worke? Are they his friends, the holy Apostles & Prophets? Indeed they as instruments haue decked and beautified the Church, with the rich & costly ornaments which were deliuered vnto them for to put vpon her, and therefore it may after a sort be spoken of them.

But more fully it is to bee vnderstood of the three persons in the glorious Trinity, the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghost: for all these doe decke and beautifie the Church. The Father hath giuen his Sonne to be the Sauour of the world, and with him, or rather in him all good things. The Sonne hath wrought all
right.

righteousnesse, and finished all things which concerne our redemption. And the holy Ghost maketh vs partakers of the same.

Thus you see what a promise is made vnto the Church: she hath goodly richiewels bestowed vpon her, and more costly she shall haue, euen vntill she come to the full and perfect beauty, which shee shall haue in the heauens. Let vs then take comfort in this promise, and set our hearts constantly and zealously to seeke the Lord, seeing it is a thing so pleasing in his sight, hast thou receyued spirituall decking in thy soule? Seeke Christ, and thou shalt haue more, for heere is a promise.

Now the Church speaketh againe, setting forth by three comparisons the excellent sweetnes of Christ Iesus, her most louing Spouse, namely, of *Spikenarde*, *Camphire* and *Myrrhe*. But there is some hardnesse in the first sentence of her speech, which is thus translated. *While the King was at his repast, my spikenarde gaue the smell thereof.* That which is translated *his repast*, may bee taken *his sitting*, for the maner was in banquets to sit round:

so the word is vsed more generally. The sense may be taken two wayes: for if we take it after our translation, then she speaketh of the King with her banquet heere vpon earth: Christ is sayd to feast and banquet with the godly while they liue here. For thus hee sayeth, *Behold I stand at the doore and knocke, if any heare my voyce and open, I will come and suppe with him, and bee with mee*, Reu. 3. ver. 20. If wee take it thus, while the King is in his sitting, that is, while hee yet sitteth in the heauens, then is there a secret comparison to the setting forth of his wonderfull and vnspeakable sweetnes. As if shee should say, euen now while the King my welbeloued is sitting in the heauens, compassed about with his holy Angels, and I heere vpon the earth below, there is a wonderfull distance betweene vs, & yet the sweet fauour of him commeth vnto mee; yea, I doe smell his sweetnesse, euen as it were, the precious spikenard, Myrrh and Camphyre.

How great is his sweetnes that commeth vnto mee through this distance? How sweet and delightfome shall he bee vnto mee, when I shall dwell with him
in

in the heauens? But it flatly gaineſayeth this ſenſe which followeth, it wee take the words, as they be in our Engliſh tranſlation, namely thus, my Spikenard gaue ſhe ſmell thereof. For then the Church commendeth her owne ſweetnes, by ſaying, *My Spikenard gaue the ſmell thereof*: Doubtleſſe ſhe prayſeth here the ſweeteneſſe of Chriſt, and therefore ſeeing the words doe indifferently beare it, becauſe the letter which is the affixe ſometime ſormeth the adiectiue, I take it to be the righter way to translate it thus: *That which is of Spikenarde gaue the ſmell thereof*. For as I ſayde by *Spikenard*, *Myrrhe*, and *Camphire*, ſhee ſetteth forth how ſweete Chriſt is vnto her.

In the next verſe ſhe likeneth him vnto a *bundle of Myrrhe*, and ſayeth, *that hee ſhall remaine between her breſts*. In our ſpeech a bundle is of ſome waight: but the word which is heere vſed, ſignifieth not onely ſuch a bundle, but alſo any little bunch of flowers or ſweetes that are bound together: ſhe comparcth him therefore vnto a bunch of *Myrrhe*, or noſegay (as we call it) ſuch as they vſe to make of the ſweeteſt flowers, which the maydens
did

did set in their bosomes betweene theyr breasts, and so they haue the sweet sauour alwayes in their nose. So this holy Virgin, the Spouse of Christ, feeling her welbeloued to bee so sweet vnto her sayeth, that hee is as a bunch of sweet myrrh, and that shee will set him in her bosome, euen betweene her breasts, and there hee shall remaine, that shee may alwayes smell his sweetnes.

In the third place she sayeth, *Hee is to her as a cluster of Camphire, or of Cyprus, a very sweet thing*: and euen as the sweetest of that kinde, which grew in the vines of Engedie. Is Christ Iesus as the Bride here sayeth of him? Is he so replenished with sweetnesse, that euen from the high heauens hee perfumeth the whole world with most excellent sweet smell? How is it then that the Spouse sayeth, it is vnto her? Doe none smell this sweetnes but she? Doubtlesse the Church only hath the right sense how sweet the Lord is. Shee euen all the Elect, the redeemed and sanctified in Christ, doe feelee the free remission of sins and reconciliation to God, from whence ariseth a sweete peace and spirituall ioy: through faith she apprehendeth him who is her san.

sanctifier, hee is fixed in her heart, euen in her brest, and so he maketh her continually to feele his sweete saueur. The children of this world doe smel the sweet saueur of many earthly things, and doe very much delight therein: but the sweetness of Christ they doe not smell. This is no maruell: for let the sunne shine neuer so bright, yet hee that is blinde percey-ueth it not. And let him that is without the sense of smelling, come among sweet saueurs, yet hee smelleth noching. The Lord Iesus is preached, and as it were the boxe of precious oyntment powred forth into the world, so that the whole ayre is as it were, perfumed with his sweet saueur: but many are so stuffed with euill saueurs, euen with the stinking saueurs of carnall lusts, which yet seeme most delightfome vnto them, as that they cannot smell any spirituall sweetnesse. When the faithfull are euen rauished in mind with the saueur of him that commeth vnto them, those other are nothing moued: They saueur the things which are of the flesh, and not the things which are of God. There is a place then, by which euery one of vs may trye himselfe, whether we bee
in

in the right way or not: you see plainly what the mother of all Gods children sayeth, how sweete Christ is vnto her, and how her heart is euen set vpon him, shee fixeth him in her breast, that shee may continually be refreshed with his sweetenesse: This is the state of euery true Christian soule. Then if thy heart be set vpon the cares and pleasures of this worrld, if thou bee earthly minded, bewayle thine estate; for what shall it auayle thee for to boast of Christianity, when thou shalt bee found to bee but a counterfeit Christian? But if thou findest that being stinking & loathsome to thy selfe, and that the Lord Iesus doth perfume thee with his sweetenesse, so that thy heart for loue of him despiseth vncleane lusts and carnall pleasures, aspiring vnto the heauens where thy treasure, and thy ioy is, then art thou most happy, It is with thee as the holy spouse here speaketh.

And know this that if thou wilt fixe Christ, euen as it were a bunch of sweet Myrrhe in thy breast, thou hast none other way to doe it, but by meditation in the holy word of God day and night: Psal. 1. For why is it that David sayth of the holy word

word of God, that it is more to be desired
 then golde, yea then much fine golde, sweeter
 then the honey, or the honey combe, Psal.
 19. But that through the word hee felte
 all the sweetnes from Christ, deriued vnto
 him.

The words in themselves can bee but
 words, and not so rich, nor so sweet: but
 as they bee the conduit pypes, or as it
 were certaine vessels or instruments, by
 which the heauenly riches are conuayed
 into our hearts, they be more to be desired
 then gold, and sweeter then honey. We
 apprehend Christ Iesus, & are engrafted
 into him through a true and liuely faith:
That faith (as the holy Apostle teacheth)
commeth by hearing, and hearing by the word
of God. Rom. 10. It is not then possible
 for these men to feele any sweet smell of
 Christ Iesus our blessed Lord, which feele
 no sweetnes in the liuely oracles of God:
 They may haue certaine fantasies and i-
 maginations: but as for any power of
 Christ, for mortification of sinne, or for
 quickning vnto vertues, there is none at
 all. They bee not perfumed, Christ is
 not vnto them as a cluster of Camphire:
 or as a bunch of Myrrhe in their bosome:
 ney

neither doth his sweetnesse come vnto them, as Spikenard. Let vs beloued, bee carefull to differ from such, by feeling that which the Bride sayeth here.

In the next wordes the Bridegroom speaketh againe, commending and praying, and that very highly, the beauty of his Bride. *Behold thou art fayre, my Loue;* (sayeth hee) *Behold thou art fayre, thine eyes are as the doves.* It is the whole desire of the Church to be well fauoured, comely and beautifull in the eyes of Christ. If hee accept of her, it is all in all, what can shee desire more? A singular ioy it must needes be then vnto her, to vnderstand for certainty that shee is beautifull indeed in his sight. And therefore the Lord to cheere her, doth pronounce in manner, as you haue heard, that shee is fayre, And now for the manner of his speech, he sayeth, *Behold thou art fayre, &c.* The Scripture useth this word *behold*, when it will stirre vp the mindes of men to consider some rare, some excellent or wonderfull matter. *As Behold a virgin shall bee with child, &c. Behold the day of the Lord, &c.* So then by this manner of speech, Christ here declareth, that the Church his spouse

is exceeding beautifull in his sight. Then further, to amplifie the matter, see how hee doubleth his speech, saying, *Behold thou art fayre, my loue, behold thou art fayre.*

This is to shew that her beauty in-deede doth excell. for it doth expresse a vehemency of mind, when the speech is so doubled. If we speake of a man which wee take to be starke nought, wee do not if wee vtter our mind to any, satisfie our selues by saying, he is naught: but wee will say, hee is naught, hee is naught. And so by doubling the speech, wee would haue known that we take him to be exceeding naught, euen such as wee can hardly expresse with words. In like maner when wee will expresse the rare excellency of any thing, wee vse to say, it is excellent, it is excellent. Euen so our Lord Iesus Christ sayth heere to his Church, *Behold thou art fayre my loue, behold thou art fayre:* declaring thereby that shee is not onely fayre, but wonderfull fayre and glorious in his sight. Let the world iudge of her how they will, esteeming her as base and deformed (for the world cannot behold the spirituall beauty and heauenly orna-ments

ments) yet shee is precious and goodly before the Lord. Wee may triumph in this, euen so many as vnfaignedly loue the Lord Iesus: that wee are so comely and pleasing in his eyes. But it may bee sayde is there not a lumpe of sinne? Are there not many foule spots and deformities in the most faithfull soules while they liue heere? Is that which is polluted and defiled with sinne, beautifull and comely in the eyes of the Lord Iesus? Can any thing be so fayre vnto him which is full of blemishes? To this I answered, as before I answered, that the Lord Iesus beholdeth the vertues and comely graces wherewith his beloued Spouse is decked: hee doth not regard her spots and deformities, *because hee will wash them all away, and make her a glorious Church to himselfe, not hauing spot or wrincke.* Ephes. 5. What may more encourage vs then this to come vnto Christ? The Diuell will tell thee thus? What doest thou seeking after Christ? hee is high, beautifull and glorious, he is most holy and pure. Thou doest but lose thy labour, hee will not regard thee which art sinnefull, spotted and deformed. Wouldst thou bee ioyned vnto him:

Cease from calling vpon him, vnles thou mightest be better welcom vnto him. To repell all such temptations of the enemy: Remember what the Lord sayeth heere vnto his Church, *Behold thou art fayre my Lone, behold thou art fayre.* For looke what hee speaketh to the whole Church, hee speaketh vnto euery faithfull soule. Is there faith, is there repentance, is there true loue, zeale, humility and meekenes? Although there be remnants of corruption, and a mixture of diuers infirmities, yet this is not taken away, *Beholde thou art fayre my loue, behold thou art fayre.* Finde out then those ornaments in thy selfe, and though they bee not perfect or full, yet be sure they be in truth, and come boldly vnto him, so louing a Sauour, and reioyce in his loue.

That clause which followeth, doth yet further extoll her beauty, when hee sayeth, *Thine eyes are like the doves.* The chiefe beauty is in the face: for let there be neuer so good shape and proportion, if there be not a well fauoured face, all is lost. Againe, in the face, the eye is very much, eyther for beauty or deformity. Now the doue hath a goodly eye, & therefore

fore in great commendation of his spouse
Christ sayth, *That her eyes are like doves
eyes.* Furthermore, the eye of the Doue is
simple and chaste and therefore in this
comparison Christ doth besides the beauty
set forth also the chaste simplicity of his
Spouse. The chasticke of virgins is much
to be commended, and a thing requisite
for all Christians to possesse their vessel in
holines. This I speake of the bodily chas-
tity. But there is also a spirituall chastity,
in which the church is sayde to be a chaste
and pure virgin vnto Christ: as there is a
spirituall whoredome often complained
of, and condemned in the scriptures: then
as in marriage, the Bridegroom doth
much delight in the chastity and simplici-
ty of his Bride: so the faithful soule being
married vnto Christ, there is chastity re-
quired. Shee may not follow after others,
or commit whoredom with them: but
shee must keepe her loue, her faith, and her
affection whole and entire towards him
alone.

They that embrace the doctrines and
religions of men, worshipping stocks &
stones, yea diuels, haue not doves eyes,
they be not chaste, but doe commit abomi-

nable whoredome, as the Word of God doth chargethem. *Such as embrace this world are called Adulterers and Adulteresses.* Iam. 4. ver. 4. then their eyes be not as the eyes of the doue. They make riches their God: for they haue set their hearts vpon them. And therefore Saint *Paul* sayeth, that *Couetousnes is idolatrie*, Col. 3. verse 5. Hee then that will bee beautifull in the sight of the Lord, must haue doves eyes: hee must with the single eye of faith worship him in Spirite and truth, euen as hee prescribeth in his holy Word: hee must loue him and stay vpon him, and not vpon riches.

What then are the eyes of the church? That indeed may bee demaunded, *The eye* (as our Saviour teacheth Math. 6.) *Is the light of the body.* And without the eye there is nothing but darkenes in the body. The eye then of the soule is the light of the soule, and that is a true and liuely faith. Where faith is not, there is nothing but darkenes, and by faith wee behold God. But *without faith*, (as it is written, Heb. 11. *It is vnpossible to please God.*) The delight then which our Lord God taketh in his seruants is in the beauty of
this

this eye of faith. Let vs then labour daily for encrease of the holy faith, that wee may be more and more beautifull: for the beauty thereof shall neuer decay. Thus wee see how the Bridegroom hath prayed his Bride, and now shee rendereth the like to him. *Behold thou art sayre my wel-beloued and pleasant, also our bed is Greene.* It is very true that the Bride is sayre, hee telleth so which cannot lie: but shee relecth not in her owne beauty, which neyther shee hath of her selfe, neyther yet is it the greatest. For first of all, this is cleare, that shee hath all her beauty and ornaments from him, It is he that *washeth her, and maketh her glorious*, Ephes. 5. Againe, though the beauty and glory of the heauenly new Ierusalem bee exceeding great, as it is set forth, Reu. 21. yet the glory of the Bridegroom exceedeth it far for hee is the fountaine of all glory and beauty. And therefore shee returneth this prayse vpon him, that hee indeed is sayre and comely. Who can set forth the glory of Christ? who can describe his beauty and comelines? There is in him, or as Saint Paul sayeth, *There dwelleth in him all fulnesse of the Godhead bodily*, Col. 2.

vers.9. All the sai hfull euen the sanctified doe glorie in their beauty: but yet so, *as they know they haue all from him,* and so indeede *as they glory onely in him,* 1. Cor. 1. vers. 31. *Behold thou art sayre my Welbeloued and comely.* Vnto this fountaine then, who is made vnto vs of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, we are to haue recourse. This most glorious beautie of the Lord is not seene, nor felt of any but the faithfull. The world hath no benefite thereby; and therefore the World hath no ioy nor delight to praise him.

Were it not for the most excellent beautie of Christ, the church had been in euill case. Then she addeth, *Also our bed is green.* She is a virgin, and yet she is the mother of all Gods children: *for Ierusalem from a-boue* (saith Paul) *is free, which is mother of vs all,* Gal. 4. ver. 26. So many as haue God their Father, haue the church their mother. When she saith then, *our bedde is greene,* shee speaketh of procreation in that heauenlie and spirituall birth. The greenenesse doth signifie flourishing and fresh springing of those goodlie plants, which are borne of God.

I need

I need not stand here to handle this doctrine of regeneration, how the elect are begotten of God in the new birth, by the immortall seede, euen by the word of truth: and that this birth is in Christ: for wee often deale in those points, therefore a word or two of that which remaineth.

The beames of our house are Cedars, the rafters are of Firrhe. Whether this bee the speech of the Bride alone, as it may seem, or whether it be vttered by them both, it is not much materiall to bee stood vpon. Here is commended their house which they dwell in: and the commendation is from the matter which it is built of, euen Cedars and Firrhe. These kindes of wood are durable and commodious otherwise: That Word which is translated Rafter, is rather to be taken for galleries, or goodlie walkes, which were wont to bee vpon the tops of Kings pallaces But what is this pallace? It is to be taken for the heauens, in which they shal for euer dwel together: I suppose rather that it is meant of an house, while she is yet in the world: what house then? surely the Church her selfe is the Temple of the liuing God. Euerie
faith-

faithfull soule is the habitation of Christ. And therefore the holy Prophet in the Psalme, calleth vpon men to open the doores of their heart to receiue in Christ: *Lift up your heades, yee gates, and bee ye lift up yee everlasting doores, and the King of glory shall come in,* Psal. 24. And thus wee haue had, as I may say, one Song betweene these Louers. Let vs pray.

THE



The third Sermon.

CHAP. II.

1 I am the rose of the field, and the Lillie
of the valleyes.

2 Like a lillie among the thornes, so is my
loue among the daughters.

3 Like as the apple tree among the trees of
the Forrest, so is my welbeloued among the
sonnes: under his shadow I had delight, and
sate downe, and his fruit was sweete vnto my
mouth.

4 Hee brought mee into the house of wine
and loue was his banner ouer me.

5 Stay mee with flagons, and comfort mee
with apples, for I am sicke of loue.

6 His left hand is vnder my head, and his
right hand doth embrace me.

7 I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem,
by the roes, and by the bindes of the field, that
ye stirre not vp, nor wake my loue untill he
please.

If

IF this bee called the Song of Songs, not onely for the excellency, but also as some suppose, it may because it doth containe in it diuers songs: then haue wee finished one Song in the former Chapter, and here wee haue another in this Chapter. The Bride did beginne the former, and now let vs see which of them doth beginne this Song. The Pronoun (*am*) which signifieth in our tongue, *I*, is common both to man and woman, as *I* man, or *I* woman, so that it cannot bee decided by the forme of speech, whether of them sayeth, *I am the rose of Sharon, and the Lillie of the valleyes*. Moreouer, the Lord Iesus and his Church are both of them sweet, fayre, comely, and beautifull: yea so sweet, and so exceeding beautifull, that all the sweetest roses, and whitest lillies in the world are not comparable vnto them.

If hee bee called the Rose and the Lillie, it is most true he is so. And if the Church be likened vnto them, it is a fite comparison. Can it not then (may som say) be gathered which of them speaketh this? yes verily it is out of doubt, that Christ speaketh this of himselfe, saying, *I*

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lillie of the valleyes. Hee doth in this set forth his owne prayse, the Church doth not speak it: for then shee should prayse her selfe, which is not meete. If you will say, may not the Church prayse her selfe, how then doth Christ prayse himselfe? This is easily answered: Christ Iesus is the fountaine of all goodnesse, he is worthy all prayse, and may rightly prayse himselfe, as hee doth in the Gospell say, *That he is the bread of life, & he is the light of the world.* The Church hath all her holinesse and beauty from Christ, shee may not prayse her selfe. *No man is to prayse himselfe,* Pro. 17. v. 2. If any man shall reply, that the Church did in the former Chapter prayse her selfe, saying, *That shee is blacke, but yet comely, &c.* I answer that shee was forced thereunto, least by those that take occasion to depraue her, the weake might stumble, & be made to despise her. Saint Paul (as you know) was constrained to prayse himselfe, least his doctrine should bee defaced, 1. Cor. 11. The false Apostles which sought all occasions to discredit him, did force him thereunto, and hee sayeth, *That hee dealt therein after the*

the manner of ffoales. Then wee may see, that as the Bride began the former song, setting forth the excellency of her Bridegroom, and her desire to be with him, as the Author, and very fountaine of all her ioy and happinesse: so heere the Bridegroom beginneth, first praying himselfe and then he commendeth his dearly beloued Spouse. Heere bee a couple prayed, euen a Bridegroom, and his bride, both of them excellent, sayre, sweet, goodly and pure: yea they resemble each the other for he is as the Lillie, and shee is so likewise. But hee is prayed first, because hee is the very fountaine, all fulnesse of sweet things is in him, and from him she receyueth all her goodnesse, beauty, and purity. Without him, what are the children of *Adam*? Are not all defiled, are not all corrupt and abominable: yea doe not all lye vnder sinne, euen ouerwhelmed in the stinking mudde of vncleanes: then that the church is a Lillie, she hath it from him, who sayeth: *I am the Lillie of the valleyes.*

And marke how the Lord is set forth vnto vs by two goodly flowers, *the rose, and the lillie.* They be sweet, and they bee beau-

beautifull: Salomon in all his royalty not like them, Mat. 6. So our Lord is holy, he is pure, he is innocent, hee is full of all beauty and glorie. And it is to bee noted, that hee compareth himselfe to the goodliest rose and the sweetest, and to the fairest Lillie: for hee sayeth, *I am the rose of Sharon*, which was a goodly fruitfull place, mentioned in diuers places of scripture, in which, as it appeareth by this place, the rose did excell: and the Lillies of the vallyes is the fayrest. Behold heere what a fauour wee haue to come vnto: how comfortable and delightsome is hee how soft and gentle? How is hee to bee coueted, to bee loued and embraced; and why doth hee publish this prayse of himselfe, but to draw vs vnto him: Why are wee so dull hearted, and so negligent, in seeking to bee ioyned vnto him, What is there vnder the sunne that should stay vs from such a sauiour. Lord make vs to behold thy glorious beauty, and to smell this sweet sauiour, that we may come vnto thee.

Let vs come to the next verse, *Like a lillie among the thornes, so is my loue among the daughters of men.*

This

This praise the Lord giueth of his church; but as I saide before, that she is as the faire, sweet, and soft lillie, she hath it from him: *Of his fulnesse wee all receyue euery grace for grace*, Iohn 1. And therefore when hee had said, I am the lillie of the vall: is, hee addeth by and by, that his loue is as the Lilly. She is made righteous in him, she is cloathed with his innocency and obedience: she is made faire and beautifull in him. But we must obserue how he setteth her forth, here by a comparison, which consisteth of four *termini*, as they cal them, the *Lillie*, the *Thornes*, his *Loue*, and the *Daughters*.

The sense may bee taken two wayes: as first, some haue taken it that hee setteth forth the state and condition of the church in which she is here in the world touching afflictions, As to say, like the soft lilly which groweth among the thornes, is pricked of them: so my spouse, my loue is pricked, and afflicted of the Daughters among whom she dwelleth. This is a true doctrine, for there be sundry assemblies of diuers religions in the World, and euery one doth challenge to be the true church, and so al take vpon them to be the daughter
tor

ters of the most high, and so the title is giuen vnto them, though they bee not so in deed: All these doe hate and persecute the true Church, and are euen like thornes in her side.

Thus I say, some haue expounded this place, and it is true, but not the sense of this place. It is not the meaning of Christ here to shew the affliction of his Spouse, or the hard condition that she is in, but to magnifie her excellent beauty. For the comparison is made thus. The Churches of Idolaters make a goodly external shew and there seemeth to be a great pompe & glory, so that to themselues they seeme to be beautifull and goodly: but my loue excelleth them as farre as the sweet white lillie excelleth the thornes. So that this word *among* is taken in comparison. Set a Lillie in comparison among Bryers, & thornes, and see how it doth excell them: so doth the true Church excell all assemblies of Worshipers in the world. Shee is base and despised in the eyes of the world, as hauing no ornaments; but in the eyes of the Lord is she full of spirituall beauty, & decked with heavenly iewels. Contrariwise, those counterfeyte

G

daugh

daughters be very gorgeous and trimme to the outward eye, they bee very pompous and shining in the flesh : but in the eyes of the Lord, they bee but as thornes. Behold here the difference. Pretious in the eyes of the Lord is his holy church : but all other assemblies, are but as thorns, meet for the fire.

The Bride hearing this commendation giuen of her by her Bridegroom, breaketh forth into his prayse, which shee doeth also set forth by a comparison, saying, *As the apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my welbeloued among the sonnes :* As he set forth her prayse, that shee excelleth all the daughters, as far as the Lillie excelleth the thorns : so she commendeth him, that hee in dignity surmounteth all the sonnes, as farre as the Appletree, goeth beyond the common trees of the forest. It may bee demaunded, who are those sonnes with whom Christ is compared? Take them whom you wil among all creatures in heauen and earth, hee farre excelleth them all.

The Angels are great and glorious, but he is greater, Heb. 1. He is farre beyond all principality and power, and might, and dominati-
on,

on, and euery name that is named, not onely in this World, but in that which is to come, Eph. 1. Right well therefore doth the Church compare him to excell all other, as far as the apple tree excelleth the common trees of the Forrest. And marke now how she prosecuteth this Allegorie, shewing what worthy benefites she receyueth from this goodly apple tree. Shee includeth them all vnder two, his shadow, and his fruite. *Under his shadow* (sayeth she) *I had delight and sate downe, and his fruite was sweet vnto my mouth.* The shadow of a tree (as all men know) is comfortable, & doth refresh those that are parched with the boyling heate of the sunne. The Church is vnder hote persecutions: there be also fiery temptations of the Diuell, & burning heate of guiltinesse: for sinne in the consciences of all the elect, vntill they be refreshed by Christ. Wherefore hee sayth, *Come vnto mee all ye that trauel and bee heauie laden, and I will refresh you,* Mat. 11. Vnder his shadow shee taketh delight: in him she findeth rest & peace, and therefore she sitteth down, and remaineth vnder his shadow. A matter worthy to be noted, how the faithfull ha-

uing found the Lord Iesus, and beeing comforted and refreshed by him, do hold themselves close vnder his shadow, they make their abode there, and seeke no further. They finde that in him there is a full sufficiency to refresh them in persecution, and to quench and coole all the heate of their sinnes. Farre otherwise it is with idolaters, and such as worship false Gods. When they haue done all that they can, they are not satisfied, they finde no ease, nor no way to take away the sting of conscience, *They multiplie their sorrowes* as the Prophet sayeth, Psal. 16. They do punish and afflict themselves many waies, seeking all meanes to make some satisfaction for their sinns, they coole the burning heate of their guilty conscience: but when they haue wearied themselves, they can finde no ease, nor no rest, for that is onely to be found vnder the shadow of this apple tree, where the holy Spouse taketh her delight, and is set downe. Shall wee not then sit downe onely vnder the shadow of Christ?

And then shee sayeth, *That his fruite is sweet vnto her mouth.* She doth not from this fruitfull tree receyue onely the com-

comfortable refreshing shadow, but also eateth of the apples which he beareth: and the same (as shee affirmeth) are sweete and pleasant to her taste. What these apples are, I need not stand to shew: the faithfull soule feedeth vpon Christ, and is nourished with all heavenly food, euen the fruites which he beareth. And what is wanting in him? *Hee is made vnto vs of God* (as Saint Paul sayeth) *wisedome, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1. Cor. 1.* The holy Church is by him alone fully satisfied with all good things, which shee doth heere declare, not onely by this Allegory of an apple tree, but also by a banquet: for shee addeth: *The King brought me into the banqueting house, and loue was the banner ouer mee.* It is in our English translation, The King brought mee into the Wine-celler. The word in the Hebrew text is, the house of Wine. To take this house of Wine for a Wine-celler, is not fitte: for it is not the order, nor comely that a King should leade his Spouse into a Wine-celler. Nay, the house of Wine is that which wee call a banqueting house. The great Kings and Noble Princes of this worlde doe vse

to entertaine one another in sumptuous and royall banquetting houses, in which they do set before the all the dainty things which can be gotten for money. This most high and glorious King of all kings, bringeth his Loue, his Queene, his deare Spouse into his banquetting house, which doth excell all the banquetting houses of earthly Kings.

The costly things which they doe banquet withall, are but trash and drosse, and beggarly scraps, in comparison of those heavenly dainties with which hee doth entertaine his Spouse. Here is therefore a most rich and precious banquet mentioned: Here is that which is written: *The Kingdome of heauen is like to a King that married his sonne, Math. 22. Hapie and blessed are all they, which are called to this Supper, Reu. 19. ver. 9.* But it may be sayde, how commeth shee into this house of Wine? And how doth she taste of these heavenly dainties? You must marke how shee sayeth, that the King brought her into the house of wine: none can enter in thither, except the Lord Iesus by his spirit do leade them in. *No man, (sayeth he) commeth vnto mee, except the Father*

*Father that sent me draw him, Iohn 6, We cannot be partakers of the heavenly treasures which are in Christ, but through the operation of the holy Ghost, as Saint Paul teacheth at large, 1. Cor. 2. And the Church doth taste of this banquet, spiri-
tually through faith; She doth so feed vpon Christ crucified, eating his flesh, and drinking his bloud. What good thing then doth she want? Is not alfulnes in Christ? We need not doubt, but that here is righteousness, here is life, here is peace, here is ioy, euen vnspeakable and glorious, as the holy Apostle Saint Peter speaketh, 1. Pet. 1. ver. 8. And it is a most speciall matter which shee addeth, saying, And lone was his banner ouer me. **

It is the vse and manner in the wars, that an Ensigne or banner is spread, and displayed: and so the bands and companies of souldiers are assembled and gathered together each company vnto their owne colours, The Church vpon earth, is a Church militant, and hath a great captain, a mighty Emperour, vnder whose conduct shee doth warre and fight the good fight of faith. His banner is displayed, euen to assemble and gather together

vnto him all his Bands and Companies:
And this banner, as shee sayeth, which is
thus spread ouer her, is loue. All the faith-
full, euen al the chosen of God are drawn
vnto Christ by his loue. What loue is
like vnto his, *Who hath giuen himselfe to
death for vs when wee were his enemies?*
Rom. 5. *Who hath washed vs in his blood.*
Reu. 1. And what is the true and liuely
faith, which bringeth men vnto God, but
euen to apprehend his fauor, and to know
that hee hath loued vs, and giuen his owne
sonne, euen by his precious death and
bloodshedding, to worke our redempti-
on? All men will confesse that this was
a singular loue in Christ: but yet euery
man is not drawne thereby to one again
with the true loue, of which hee himselfe
doth speake in the Gospell, saying, *If any
loue mee hee will keepe my Word,* Iohn 14.
23. And in the same Chapter hee sayeth
*Hee that hath my commandements and kee-
peth them, is he that loueth me:* but onely
they which feele that the same Loue of
Christ reacheth vnto themselves: For
the loue of Christ is the Ensigne spreade
by which hee draweth all his chosen vn-
to him: and no one is drawne, but they
one.

onely, ouer whome the same ensigne is displayed. For marke this how she sayeth *Loue was his banner ouer me.* The loue of Christ is preached, and so the banner is after a sort displaied ouer al that do heare what hee hath done for mankind: notwithstanding no man is drawne, sauing such as are assured that he hath loued the: for loue is his banner ouer them. They haue the full assurance of faith, that hee suffered death to make satisfaction for their finnes, that in him they are iustified, and sanctified, and shal bee glorified. *His spirite doth witnesse together with their spirite, that they bee the sonnes of God.* Rom. 8. These doe indeed loue him againe: These are enflamed with a most vehement desire to come vnto him, and they ioy and delight in him continually. Yea I may say rightly, that there are not any which doe worshippe and serue the Lord with any acceptable seruice or worshippe, but onely those ouer whome the banner of his loue is spred.

For vndoubtedly, that which proceedeth not of loue, is but as a ductie, which is forced, it commeth not in his right kinde, It is wrought for some sinister

nister respects, or wrongforth by a seruile feare. *Without faith* (sayeth the holy Ghost, Heb. 11) *it is impossible to please God.* What is the reason of that? The reason is manifest, that vntill a man by faith doe finde and know that the Lord loueth him, hee cannot loue God.

Wee loue him (sayth S. Iohn) *because hee loued vs first*, 1. Iohn 4. And not louing God, he cannot offer any thing vnto him, which is acceptable and pleasing in his sight.

The Lord God is delighted onely with that which proceedeth from a franke hart which sincerely loueth him. And as S. Paul sayeth, Galat. 4. *Faith worketh by charity.* Behold then, the fountaine of all holy duties in man towards his Lord God, euen loue, and the same wrought by the banner of his loue spread over vs, as the holy Spouse heere speaketh. Vntill wee doe behold this banner in deed displayed ouer vs, wee lie vtterly as dead blockes, touching any holy action: A man may force his hands, his feet, his tongue, yea euen his mind also vnto the doing of such things as are required: but all is nothing vntill the loue of Christ constrain vs: when
that

that banner is spread ouer vs, then are we drawne, then we runne. *Simon Ioanna louest thou mee? feede my sheepe. louest thou mee, feede my lambs.* Iohn 1. 21. And looke what Paul did, hee sayeth *The loue of God constraineth vs,* 2. Cor. 5. 14. And we read of the woman in the gospell, which washed the feet of the Lord with teares, and wiped them with the hayres of her head: From whence proceedeth all this? Was it not from hence, as Christ sayeth, that she loued much. And why did she loue much? Hee also sheweth, when hee sayeth: *for many sinnes are forgiven her.* Shee had felt the banner of his loue spreade ouer her, in forgiuing her many sinnes, and this did draw her to loue him exceedingly. Then may wee learne from this speecch of the Church, what is the chiefe duety of the Ministers of the Gospell, namely, to spread this banner of his loue vnto the people: yea, euen to publish and lay open the riches of his loue towards mankind, in offering himselfe to be a ransom for the sinnes of the world, to draw men out of eternall misery, vnto a most happy and blessed life.

And then if you will loue the Lorde
Iesus

Iesus indeed, seeke to apprehend his loue. Every man that taketh a wife and a right course, must come vnto this with the holy Spouse, *Loue was his banner ouer mee.* For if Christ by faith doe leade him into the banqueting house, euen to make him taste of all those heavenly daynties, which be in himselfe, so that hee feelee, that through his Crosse his sinnes are defaced, hee is made righteous and innocent, he is deliuered from the tyranny of the Diuell, from death and endles misery, and made heyre of euerlasting glory: then doth he make him behold the banner of his loue spread ouer him: and then is the heart of that man set on fire with a burning loue towardes the Lord Iesus Christ: hee seekeeth after him, as after his chiefe treasure and hearts solace: he delighteth to heare his voyce: hee taketh pleasure in his commaundements: hee doth all his endeauor to set forth his glory and prayse, yea all fruites of loue doe follow, euen of a most earnest loue.

But that will appeare more by the next words, in which she cryeth out, *Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples, for I am sicke of loue.*

Behold

Behold heere a wonderfull effect of those former things which hee spake of: She compared Christ vnto an appletree, vnder whose shadow shee tooke delight, and sate downe, and his fruit was sweete vnto her mouth. *He brought her (as shee sayeth) vnto the house of wine, and loue was his banner ouer her.* Hereupon her heart is so rauished with loue towards him, that she is loue-sicke, and ready to sound therewith, and cryeth out to haue them to stay her with flagons, and to comfort her with apples. Here is a maruellous passion of loue. The similitude is drawn from hence when a virgin is betrethed, and through the vehemency of her loue towards her Spouse, is sicke and foundeth. A greater or a more vehement, or passionate loue there cannot be. By this therefore the spirituall and holy loue of the Church is figured: for the faithfull soule tasting the sweetnes of those apples, and of that heavenly wine, hath such a desire of Christ, as cannot with any words be expressed. She sayth, shee is sicke of loue, and as it were swoounding. And marke this well as a speciall point, where she seeketh helpe, & how shee is supported.

The

The sweetnesse of those Apples, which shee tasted, and of the precious Wine, brought her into this passion, yet her appetite and desire of them is not thereby diminished, but shee desireth them so much the more. Shee calleth for flagons of that wine, to comfort and refresh her spirites, & to haue those same apples strowed vnder her, that shee may bee refreshed with their sweet sent.

The faithfull whome Christ leadeth into the house of wine, euen vnto the banquet of heavenly things, doe not receyue the same in full measure, but as it were a taste is giuen them by small drops, which Saint Paul calleth *The first fruits of the spirit*, Rom. 8. v. 23. And, *the earnest of the Spirit*, Eph. 1. Now by these drops they doe perceyue, what a wonderfull sweetnesse there is in those heavenly things, & hereupon they bee euen as it were, sicke with loue and ready to swoound with the desire of hauing more: for you see that shee cryeth out for more: It is the wil of GOD, that his redeemed shall not while they liue heere, be filled with those precious things which be in Christ, *in whome there is all fulnes, and of whose fulnes wee all*

receyue, Iohn 1. 16. But a measure is distilled into their soules, as it were by little creuises, and so they doe still hunger & thirst after them exceedingly. But vnto whom doth shee crie out for the flagons, and for whose sweet apples? Shee seemeth not to direct her words vnto Christ: for shee speaketh in the plurall number, and not vnto some one. Verily, shee calleth vnto those, into whose hands Christ hath committed these treasures to deliuer vnto her. And who be they? Euen his faithfull seruants, the Prophets and Apostles, and all holy Teachers. For by the Ministry of these, the Lord hath deliuered vnto his Church all those heauenly dainties. They haue alwayes fed her: and therefore shee doth rightly direct her speech vnto them, not as vnto the Authors, but as vnto the ministers of those things: for shee knoweth that they bee wholly and altogether from her welbeloued: *They bee but as stewards and disposers of the misteries of God,* 1. Cor. 4. 1.

I neede not stand to make prooffe of this, which al that haue any sparke of true knowledge do confesse. But let vs obserue heere some things for our instruction.

on. As first, what is the cause that fewe are sicke, and ready to swoound with the loue of Christ? Or that so fewe in comparison of the multitude, doe call for the flagons of the heauenly wine, and for the sweete apples? We see that almost all doe seeke after golde and siluer, bending their whole study and care, night and day how they may get them.

The cause is manifest, men by nature can tell what these rhings are worth, and doe feele commodities arising by them which are sweet to the flesh. They neuer tasted of those rich dainties which bee in Christ, and therefore they bee not moued with any desire of them. For who can long for those things which he neuer felt any sweetnes of? Nay the madnesse of the world goeth yet further: for they doe mocke and scorne at the bride when shee thus calleth for these heauenly things: For if they see any that is earnestly affected to call vpon the Apostles and Prophets in their writings, and to the faithfull teachers that publish the same, to haue this wholesome wine and dainty apples ministred vnto them, though they doe it not so earnestly, as they themselues seeke gold

gold : yet they deeme them to bee out of their wits, to be foolish and mad. Doubtlesse, they be more then mad which preferre earthly and transitory things, euen very drolle, before the rich treasures which are in Christ.

Then further, you shall haue many that will confesse, that in deed all good things are in Christ, and that such onely are happy as be partakers of the same, and they seeme to haue a desire to enioy the same, but they disdain that which the holy Church doth here, they will by no meanes seeke them at their hands whome the Lord hath made the desposers. They despise the doctrine of the Prophets, and Apostles, they care not for hearing the same published. They know not that the true Church, euen all the faithfull, doe call vnto the ministers of the liuely word, *Stay mee vp with flagons, and comfort mee with apples*; No, they will receyue all as it were immediately from Christ himselfe. These are blinde and bewitched by Satan : for they know not Gods ordinance, and how Christ doth feede his church with heauenly things by the hands of his Ministers.

Indeede they bee but instruments, *Paul planteth, Apollo watereth, but God giveth the increase, 1. Cor. 3. 6.* It is the Lorde himselfe that supporteth his Church by his diuine power: and therefore you may see what shee addeth touching that matter in the next verse, saying, *His left hand is vnder my head, and with his right hand he doth embrace me.*

She doth so call (as we haue seene) for the things at the handes of the ministers: but shee feeleth and confesseth that all the efficacy is from the Lord himselfe, shewing that hee doth stay her vp with both hands. *His left hand (sayeth she) is vnder my head, and with his right hand he doth embrace me.* Then marke how we are to take heed of two extremities. It is Gods ordinance to deliuer al the heauenly treasures vnto vs by the hands of his Ministers: he worketh by them as by instruments, holding them as stars in his right hand, *Ren. 1.* We must take heed that we disdaine not to receyue them that way. And then wee must also beware, that wee depend not vpon the men, but with the Church here looke vphigher, euen vnto the Lord himselfe, who worketh all in all: for by
the

the ministry of men wee are to be led, as it were, by the hand vnto Christ, in him wee are to stay, hee onely must vpholde vs.

Behold here the kindnesse of our Lord Iesus Christ vnto those that truly do seeke him. Their frailty is great, but hee doth vphold them, & comfort them with both hands. Here is the rest, here is the ioy, here is the comfort of every afflicted soule, to be receyued thus into the arms of Christ: And what sayeth hee? *Come vnto mee al ye that trauell, and be heauy laden, and I will refresh you,* Math. 11. 28. Here is a sweet Sauiour to come vnto. These things are plaine and easie: but that which followeth in the next verse is somewhat hard to bee expounded. *I charge you O you daughters of Ierusalem, by the Roes and by the Hindes of the field, that you stirre not up, nor wake my loue vntill hee please.* Indeed they are thus to bee translated: *I adsure you O daughters of Ierusalem, or I lay an oath vpon you, or cause you to sweare by the Roes; or by the Hindes of the field, if you stirre up, or if you awake, &c.* for he vseth the worde of making others to take an oath. Here will arise some difficulty about this manner of

oath, by the Roes or Hindes: but the greatest difficulty is to finde whether it bee Christ that giueth this straight charge, or the Church. By our English translation, you may say, there is no doubt, but that Christ giueth this charge, because it is *That you wake not my loue untill hee please.* For if it were the Church, she would say, *That you wake not my loue untill shes please.* Yea, but it is not so easily discusled by the Hebrew text: for the worde *loue*, *ahabbah*, is feminine: and if the church call Christ her loue, the construction is with a verbe of the feminine gender. Some doe expound it, that the Lord Iesus doth charge the false sisters of the Church, the degenerate assemblies of Idolaters, that they doe not molest, nor trouble this happy peace & rest of the Church, which she hath in him: for the Diuell hath plentie of such to worke his disquietnes withall. Some others doe make some reasons to proue, that it is not Christ, but the Church which giueth this straight charge not vnto her false sisters, but vnto her companions, that they doe not by any rude behauiour cause Christ to depart away, or to withdraw himselfe

Indeede the Church is to warne all her weake daughters, to carrie themselues reuerently and purely in the presence of Christ, that they doe not any thing that may displease him.

The reasons alledged are not so strong as to proue it of necessity, to be the speech of the Church, and therefore I will not rehearse them. Which of them spake it, the matter is of great waight, as appeareth by the charge that is giuen by oath. But now touching the oath: are wee not to sweare onely by the Lord God? Is it not hee alone that searcheth the hearts, and the raines, and can tell where there is integrity? Is not he alone the patron of the iust and innocent, and the taler of vengeance vpon such as abuse his name? how then is here an oath giuen by creatures?

Some doe expound the words with an eclipse thus: *Abide you abroad with the Roes or with the Hindes of the field.* Others doe take it not as an oath, but as an obtestation, as if these things, namely, the Roes and the Hindes onely are called to witnesse, as you know it is an vsual thing in the Prophets, to call vpon creatures to

bear witness. As *Moses* calleth heauen and earth to record. Verely, it doth not seeme here to be a simple obtestation: yet doth it not warrant men to take an oath by creatures, in as much as all thinges in this Song be mysticall. If it be an oath giuen by Christ for the quiet of his Church: Let vs take heed lest we incur the danger of it, by being found among her disturbers. If it be the Church that chargeth vs to beware of light and wanton, or rude behauiour in the presence of so holy, and so glorious a King: Let vs feare & tremble, let vs studie continually to bee holy and pure, meete to bee admitted into the banquetting house, and to bee in the presence of a King and Queene so glorious.

Thus much for this time.

Let vs pray.

THE



The fourth Sermon.

CHAP. II.

8 It is the voyce of my welbeloued, behold
hee commeth leaping ouer the mountaines, &
skippeth ouer the hilles.

9 My Welbeloued is like a Roe, or a young
Hynde: behold he standeth behind our wall
looking through the windowes, shewing him-
selfe through the grates.

10 My welbeloued spake, and sayde vnto
me, Arise my loue, my sayre one, and come
away.

11 For behold the Winter is past, the raine
is changed, and gone away.

12 The flowers appeare in the earth, the
time of the singing of birds is come, and the
voyce of the turtle is heard in our land.

13 The figge tree hath brought forth her
young figges, and the vines with their small
grapes haue cast a saour: Arise my loue,
my sayre one, and come away.

H 4

14 My

14 My done thou art in the holes of the Rocks, in the secret places of the stayres, shew mee thy face, make mee to heare thy voyce, for thy voyce is sweet, and thy face is comely.

15 Take vs the foxes, the little foxes, which destroy the vines, for our vines have small grapes.

16 My welbeloued is wine, and I am his, hee feedeth among the Lillies.

17 Vntill the day breake, and the shadowes flie away. Returne my welbeloued, & bee like a Roe, or a young Hart vpon the mountaines of Bether.



IN the former parte of this Chapter, we haue seene how Christ Iesus calling himselfe a rose, & a Lillie, giueth vs to vnderstand, that in him is the fountaine, the fulnes and perfection of all sweet and goodly things. Also that from his sweetnesse and beauty, his Church is made so sweet and fayre, that shee excelleth all other daughters as farre as the pure white Lillie doth the thornes. Then shee setteth forth the prayse of her wel-

welbeloued, by a comparifō alfo: namely, that as the appletree excelleth the trees of the wood, ſo doth he excei the ſonnes. And further, by the ſhadow of this tree, and the fruit, and by being ledde into the houſe of wine, ſhee declareth that in him, ſhee is made partaker of all heavenly bleſſings, and feeling his loue, ſhee is euen ſicke with loue towards him, calling for the further partaking of thoſe graces, and is embraced, comforted and ſupported by Chriſt.

Laſtly, a ſtraight charge is giuen, that this may not be interrupted. Now in the reſt of this Chapter, vnder another ſimilitude, namely, of the flouriſhing Spring, ſhee ſetteth foorth, how hee calleth her foorth to the viewing and partaking of thoſe heavenly things. I will firſt lay open vnto you (as I may ſay) the letter of the Allegory: for thereby wee ſhall the more eaſily come to the ſenſe. Conſider of two louers herein the world, betrothed the one to the other. The Woman remayning in the houſe in the winter, the man often abroad in the fields, and when the Spring time is come, hee calleth and enuiteth his Spouſe to come foorth to walke

walke, and to take the delight and comfort of those pleasant things, which the Spring doth afford. Euen so the Church the beloued Spouse of Christ, being of her selfe here in this world, as it were, shut vp in the house, vnder the barrennes of winter, is by her welbeloued called vpon to come forth, as it were to walke, to view and to take the solace and comfort of that heauenly spring.

This is the summe of all, that shee doth here report. And now let vs come to the particulars. *It is the voyce* (sayth she) *of my welbeloued, behold he commeth leaping over the mountaines, and skipping over the hilles. My welbeloued is like a Roe or a yong Hinde.* In these words you see, that shee sheweth how shee perceyued his comming, and the manner of his comming. She perceiueth his comming by his voyce, shee heareth his voyce, shee knoweth his voyce: *It is the voyce,* (sayeth she) *of my welbeloued: behold he commeth.* The Lord Iesus doth cal his chosen by his holy Word, that is his voyce. *And they know his voyce,* as he sayeth, *Iohn 10. My sheepe heare my voice.* By faith they discern his voyce, euen the heauenly and pure doctrine: the men

of

of this world, euen the Infidels that can not
heare him. There be many opinions, say
they, how can wee tell which is the truth?
And marke how by his voyce, that is, by
his liuely word she perceyueth that Christ
commeth vnto her. It is a spirituall, and
an inuifible comming, and shee hath a
spirituall care to heare, and the eyes of the
spirit to behold him. *Let him that hath an
eare (sayeth the holy Ghost) heare what the
Spirite sayeth to the Churches,* Reu: 2. 3.
This voyce of Christ soundeth in the
world, but none heare it, none ioy in it
but the holy church with her children.
You may reade in Prouerbs, chap. 1. How
Salomon there sayeth, *That the highest
wisdome (that is Christ) uttereth her voyce
aloude in the streetes, in the open places, and
assemblies, but is not regarded.* Onely (I
say) the church heareth, and is so ioyfull at
it, that shee sayeth, *behold hee commeth,*
Then touching the manner of his com-
ming, she setteth it forth, not onely to be
swift and speedy, comparing him to a *Roe
or young Hinde,* but also that no difficulties
in the way can hinder or let him: for he
leapeth ouer mountaines and hilles. A
most worthy thing to be noted, that no-
thing

thing can keepe backe or separate Christ from his Church : his loue is so great towards her. There bee euen, as it were hie hills and mountaines of sinnes in the people of God, which might separate, and the Diuell rayseth vp bankes to make the way vnpleasant : but hee passeth ouer all these high mountaines . so abundant is his kindnesse and loue. Saint *Paul* handleth this point, *Rom. 8. 38. 39.* *Neither death nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate vs from the loue of God, which is in Christ Iesus our Lord.* Of this the Spouse gloryeth, saying, *Behold hee commeth leaping ouer the mountaines, and skipping ouer the hills.* To conclude this point, wee see that the faithfull doe by the voyce of Christ perceyue him comming vnto them, and that hee cometh swiftly ouer all lets.

Now to the next point, wherein is set forth how they see him present. *Behold he* (sayeth *snee*) *he standeth behinde our wall looking through the Windowes, shewing him selfe through the gates.* This dooth expresse that Christ doth not in full maner

ner exhibite and shew himselfe present vnto his church in this world. He standeth, as it were, behinde the wall, and looketh in at the windowes, shewing himselfe through tatelles, this is cleare and manifest, for *Abraham* saw him: the Prophets and *Moses* saw him: yea all the godly vnder the law saw him: but yet vnder types and shadowes, as it were looking in through the Windowes. And since he was manifested in the flesh, and hath shewed himselfe more fully, wee see him present but by faith. Behold (sayeth hee) *I am with you vnto the end of the world.* But yet the Church seeth him present, but by the eye of faith. Also as Saint *Paul* sayeth, *Wee know but in part, 1. Cor. 13.* Wee see him not fully, but as it were through the windowes. Then marke yet further how shee proceedeth in setting forth, how hee calleth her: *My welbeloned spake and saide vnto mee, Arise my loue, my fayre one, and come away.* What meaneth this? Verely, the regenerate, euen the holy ones of God are regenerate but in part while they liue here. There remaineth still in them a lumpe of corruption, and so farre as that extendeth, they bee earth-

earthly minded, and euen willingly sit downe in this world, hauing their affections somewhat entangled with the cares and pleasures of the flesh: wherefore this is the continuall voyce of Christ, sounding in their eares, Arise, O ye whom I loue, which are fayre in my sight, and come away: Arise, arise from the loue & delight in earthly things, and set your affection vpon the things which are aboue. I need not to stand in the amplification of this point, the holy Scripture in all places, both in the Prophets and Apostles, is full of these voyces which call vpon vs to arise vp in our hearts and mindes from these transitorie thinges^t which bee vpon the earth, vnto heauen, and heavenly things.

Happy are wee if wee doe heare this voyce of Christ calling vs so louingly, so that wee obey it. O how dull, how heauy, how lumpish and prone to the earth, wee are, which are so little moued with this continuall call of our most louing sauiour? Wee are ready to minde earthly things, and euen to sitte downe in them, and yet our conuersation is in heauen, Phil. 3. There is the holy City where our
free-

freedome is, after that wee should long. Wee are heere but pilgrimes and strangers for a time: why doe wee then sitte downe? why doe we not, as wee are here willed arise and come away? The worldlings are not moued with this, for they can feelee no taste nor sweetnesse in any thing but the world, and it is death to the to heare this voyce, *Arise and come away.*

Can they willingly part from their treasure, yea, I may say, euen from their God, vpon which they haue set their heart, that is to say, their gold, their siluer, their houses, and their lands? Let it not bee so with vs: but let vs arise with our holy mother at the voyce of Christ: let vs in heart & minde ascend vp into the Heauens, *using the things of this world as though wee used them not*, according to the doctrine of the holy Apostle, 1. Cor. 7.

Moreouer, let vs marke here, how our Lord Iesus Christ lifteth vp his Church from this earth vnto the heauens, euen by his mighty voyce.

All the faithfull in themselves, are euen like vnto heauy stones, which doe flye so farre vpward as they are driuen by a force, and when that force ceaseth, they
come

come downe againe apace to the earth: For looke how farre the Lord with his voyce and loue listeth vs vp, so farre wee ascend, and if that worke not any longer, wee come downe with speed.

In the next place wee haue the Allegorie, vnder which the Lord doth perswade the church to arise, and come away from the loue of these earthly things, vnto the meditation and desire of the heauenly and spirituall life. It is taken from the time of the yeare. In Winter all things lye as it were barren vnder frost and snow and colde blasts. There is no pleasure to bee taken then. But in the Spring time all sweete things spring, and bud forth, and there is the melody of birds singing. Then is there comfort & solace to bee taken in walking abroad: Therefore he sayeth: *For behold the winter is past, the raine is changed and gone away.* And then hee addeth a description of the Spring, by the flowers that appeare, by the singing of birdes, by the voyce of the Turtle, by the figge tree bringing forth figs, and the vines with their first grapes, casting forth a smell.

The perswasion then beeing drawne
from

from the comparison of the times, we are to consider, how it standeth in the mysticall sense. And that is, what the state of all the Elect was before their calling, and then what it is after they be called of the Lord, and regenerate. Before they be called, their hearts be even like the earth in winter, vnder the cold frost, & stormes of sinne: For there can no sweete thing grow vp, there is an vtter barrennesse. After that the Lord hath called them, and that they be regenerate, there is an heavenly warmth of his spirit, and the sweet dew of his graces, and then the sweetest flowers appeare, then the wholesom fruits doe budde forth: then is there peace and ioy in the holy Ghost, euen heavenly melody, which is represented here by the singing of the birds.

Then the perswasion standeth thus vnto euery one of the faithfull, which are yet somewhat entangled with earthly things, and with the loue of this present world: so that their affections are not so lifted vp, and set vpon the desire of heavenly things as they ought to be. *Arise, O my Loue, my sayre one, and come away: for you ought not to set your hearts now vpon thinges*

I

that

that are vaine and transitory, as you did in the dayes of your ignorance, whē you lay frozen in your sinnes. For hauing now beene made partakers of the heavenly graces, you must take your solace and delight in heavenly things.

It is a very strange thing to consider the slacknes that is in the holy Saints of God, to arise vp from this vaine world, vnto the meditation and ioy of the world to come. When we haue felt the worke of God in vs, vnto our great ioy and comfort, when the sweet flowers and wholesome fruites haue budded forth in vs: yet a drouisynesse doth come vpon vs, and wee could euen willinglie seate our selues heere below together with those men, which haue their portion in this life. It is no maruell, that men so long as they haue not tasted of heavenly things, doe greedily laye holde of this World, and cleaue vnto it: they know no better, but as I sayd, is it not very strange & meruellous, that such as haue been euen rauished in their minds with the sweetnes of Christ: should euen waxe colde againe? Thus it falleth out, and therefore shee reporteth how he calleth againe: *Arise my loue, my fayre one, and come*

come away. So hard a thing it is to drawe our mindes from this earthly trash. But most specially you may note in this place the wonderfull kindnesse of Christ Iesus our Lord, who notwithstanding, the dulnesse of his chosen, yet esteemeth the so highly, as appeareth by his speeches, *Arise my loue, my fayre one, &c.* We see plainly by this, that the great imperfections which remaine in the Regenerate, do not diminish the loue of Christ towards them for they be still his loue: nor make them deformed, nor loathsome in his eyes, for hee sayeth, *my fayre one.* From hence we may draw two very good and necessary instructions, The one is for our comfort against the temptations of the Diuell, who taketh occasion by the fraileties and imperfections, which are in vs, to beare vs in hand, that we be vtterly deformed in the eyes of Christ, and that hee doth not loue, but hate vs.

Beloued, if a man haue touching true faith and repentance, a sincerity and an vnfaigned vprightnesse of heart, let him be assured, that albeit he bee clogged with much corruption of the flesh, the burthen whereof doth make him to sigh & grone,

1 2

seeing

seeming deformed in his owne eyes : yet is hee beautifull and deare vnto Christ.

Then the other instruction is, that wee are to imitate this kindnesse of our Lorde and Master. Many when they beholde somethings amisse in those that professe the Gospell of Christ, neuer looke vpon their vertues, although they shine: but abhorre and despise them. Let vs take heede of this, and let vs entirely loue and esteem them fayre and precious, which feare the Lord, and study to obey him, although we see in them otherwise many great imperfections. This example of Christ lea-
deth vs hereunto, who calleth her his loue, and his fayre one, which yet is so addicted in part vnto this vaine world, and so dull to the meditation and delight in heauenly things, that hee calleth vnto her againe and againe, *Arise and come away, arise, and come away.* Yea, wee may perceiue this slacknesse, and as it were, halting dulnesse that is in the Saints, in that hee calleth vpon her, and vseth yet a further perswasion vnto her in the next verse, to come forth vnto him. The wordes are these: *My done which art in the cleftes of the Rocks, in the secret places of the flayres, shew me*

mee thy face, make mee to heare thy voyce, for thy voyce is sweet, and thy face is comely.

The latter part of this sentence is cleare and easie to be vnderstood, that he calleth vnto her to come into his company, and to talke with him: adding this encouragement, that shee is beautifull, and well fauoured of face, and her speech is vnto him sweet and pleasant. But how are we to take the former part which is this, *My doue which art in the clefts of the rocke, in the hollow place of the stayer?* Here is a mystical speech, which we are to enquire the meaning of first, according to the Letter: Wee know that a doue doth seeke for some hole or hollow place in a rocke, or other high thing, into which she doth enter to bee secret and safe from deuouring birdes that would eate her vp, as from the also Fowler. Euen so this doue, this simple, meeke, harmeles, and chaste Spouse of the Lord Iesus, hath her dwelling in the hollow place of an high Rocke, the cliftes whereof, are as staves, but so as in a rocke, they bee such as men cannot clime vp.

But what is this rocke then in which this doue resteth? No man can deny but

that this rocke is the most high God. You know that the holy Prophet *David* calleth him, *The rocke of his saluation*. This is a rocke which none can clime vnto, in the clift of this rocke, the doue dwelleth safe. Sathan is euen like vnto a greedie kite, which alwayes lyeth in wayte for to deuoure her, but shee remayneth close in this rocke, where he cannot come at her. What is then to bee vnderstood by the clift or hollow place of this rocke? Surely, it is Gods eternall counsell and election of his Church vnto life and glory: for it is in that holy counsell of the Lord, euen as in the hollow place of a most high rocke, that this doue dwelleth safe, Saint *Paul* sayeth, *The foundation of God standeth sure, and hath this seale, God knoweth who bee his.* 2. Tim: 2. ver. 19. And our Sauour sheweth, *That it is not possible that the Elect should perishe*, Math. 24. It is a madnesse for any man to thinke that Almighty God can erre, or that hee can change his purpose, yea, or that any can withstand the same. Therefore in his eternall counsel and election, as in a most sure rocke, the saluation of the church resteth.

The

The Prince of darknesse hath endeauoured with all his forcesto assayle the same, but all in vaine, Reu. 12. Thus we see briefly what is meant by this that hee calleth *her his doue which is in the clystes of the rocke.* Where we note what a weake state the Church were in, if shee had not her abode in this rocke. For if shee were out of of it, looke how the poore harmlesse doue is a prey vnto the deuouring hawke, so shoud shee bee vnto her enemies: her strength is in this high rocke, her safety in the place, in which shee remayneth, in her selfe shee is but as a silly doue: from this rocke (as I sayde) none can plucke her downe. For marke what Christ sayth touching that matter. *My sheepe heare my voyce, and I know them, and they follow mee, and I giue vnto them eternall life, and they shall not perish for euer, neyther shall any plucke them out of my hand. My Father that gaue them mee is greater then all, neyther can any plucke them out of the hand of my Father, I and the Father are one,* Iohn 10. ver. 27. 28. 29. 30. There is then no destroying of this doue, though shee bee in her selfe but as a Doue, the hawke, the kite, or the fowler cannot

reach vnto her. Blessed be the Lord God who hath thus prouided for the safety of his poore seruants: and blessed bee the power of his Maiesty, World without end.

Now let vs obserue further, wherfore the Bridegroom doth make mention of this, that his doue is in the clifts of the rocke. Surely, hee doth herein note the very well head and fountaine of all heauenly blessings, according as Saint Paul openeth the matter, saying: *Blessed bee God, eue the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ who hath blessed vs with all spirituall blessings in heauenly things in Christ, as hee had chosen vs in him before the foundation of the world was layde, that wee should bee holy and without blame before him, through loue,* Ephes. 1, vers. 3. 4. Then further hee vsseth it as an argument to moue his spouse to the contemplation of heauenly things. As if hee should speake thus vnto her, O my doue, thou art from euermore in the secret counsell of the most high God chosen in mee, and ordayned vnto eternall glory in the heauens: thou art prepared for things far more excellent then these that be transitory, set not thine heart therefore

fore vpon them, but lift vp thy mind and
thine affection vnto heauenly things, me-
ditate vpon them, and delight therein:
come so into my presence and let me see
thy face, and heare my voyce. Iudge in
your selues beloued, is it meete that such
as bee chosen to be heyres of eternal glo-
ry, should set their heart vpon the things
of this world? Surely, al the while that
they doe so, they doe euen hide their fa-
ces from Christ, they do not vtter their
voyce vnto him. Marke then I pray you
how that when the faithfull soule dooth
rise vp in contemplation from these earth-
ly things vnto the heauenly, taking her
delight and solace in them, she doth then
shew her face vnto Christ, shee maketh
him then to heare her voyce. And then
is her voyce sweet vnto him, for shee vo-
tereth vnto him many sweet prayers, prai-
ses and thanks for all his benefits: and her
face also is fayre and delightfome vnto
him. What an encouragement is this to
make vs seeke after the Lord Iesus? Doth
he call vpon vs in this maner, and doth he
thus esteeme the voyce and beaurty of the
faithfull soule that cometh vnto him? and
shal we be slacker? Shall we lye drouisie &
dull

dull in our affections? Let this same speech of Christ bee euen printed in our mindes. *My dove that art in the holes of the rocke, in the secret place of the sayre, shewe mee thy face, make me to heare thy voyce, for thy voyce is sweet, and thy face is comely.* Is not this a most sweet voyce of our Saviour which hee vttereth vnto euery one of vs? Ought it not to make vs to runne swiftly vnto him? Are they not worthy a thousand times to perish, who set light by the calling of so louing a Saviour? Arise, stirre vp your selues, be not so earthly minded, but delight in heauēly things; let your mind ascend vp vnto Christ, and talke with him:

If hee were austere, or did despise vs, it might haue some colour for negligence, but when hee doth thus call vpon vs to come, what excuse can there be? Let vs not bee like vnto the idolatrous Papists, who seeke vnto other mediators, and intercessors, as if wee poore wretches might not be so bold as to presume to come vnto him. You see how that he willet his dove to come to him, hee doth not send her vnto others, saying, *Shew me thy face, make me to heare thy voyce.* Shall wee

we then belieue the Diuell, who in the Popish Church telleth vs, that wee must deuoutely worship and pray to som Saint, that so we may procure his or her fauour to entreat Christ for vs, because it is ouer great presumption for vs to com directly vnto him? O beloued, will you giue credite to such against the flat voyce of the Lord? Looke also what is written, *Seeing therefore Brethren, that by the blood of Iesus wee may bee bold to enter into the holy place by the new and liuing way, which hee hath prepared for vs, through the vayle that is his flesh, and seeing wee haue an high Priest which is ouer the house of God Let vs drawe neere with a true heart, in assurance of faith, sprinckled in our hearts from an euil conscience, and washed in our bodies with pure water,* Heb. 10. vers. 19. 20, 21. 22. Thus are wee willed to goe to the Lord our God himselfe.

Now it followeth, *Take vs the Foxes, the little Foxes which destroy the vines, for our vines haue small grapes.* Here is a charge giuen, and a reason rendred, the charge is, that they should catch the foxes, yea even the little foxes, the reason is, because they destroy the vines, being yet in shooting forth

forth their small grapes. Here arise diuers questions, as first who giueth this charge, take vs the foxes. Secondly, to whom this busines is committed. Thirdly, what manner of foxes these be, and how they destroy the vines. And lastly, how they are to be taken.

Touching the first, it is Christ who giueth this charge. He hath care ouer his vine, he hath authority to commaund, & the Church doth here report his speech, and also vnder his authority doth comand likewise the same thing. Then for the second, it is out of all doubt that this charge is layde vpon all the faithfull Pastors and Teachers, and godly Princes. Concerning the third, these Foxes bee false teachers, heretikes and seducers of the Lords people. These be called Foxes, because of their subtilty and craft: for all sorts of heretikes and false teachers, doe winde in themselves craftily, making a shew of truth and holinesse. *They come in, sheepes cloathing* (as our Sauior sayth, *Mat. 7. 15.*) *But inwardly they bee nothing but rauening wolues.* It may seem very strange how such destroying foxes, yea such grieuous rauening Wolues, as the holy Ghost

ter-

termeth them. Mat. 7. Act. 20 should make such a fayre shew of truth and holinesse, as that they should seduce and draw men from the right way, into the crooked by-ways of heresies and errors, and so destroy and waste the vines. But Saint Paul sheweth a reason, that it is no maruell, for speaking of the foxes of his time, he sayth: *Such false Apostles are deceitfull workers transformed into the Apostles of Christ: and no maruell (sayeth he) for Sathan himselfe is transformed into an Angell of light, therefore it is no great thing, though his Ministers transforme themselves, as though they were the Ministers of righteousness,* 2. Cor 11. v. 13. 14. 15. These foxes then haue their subtilty from that great soxe the diuell. Many and differing sort of these Foxes, were in the time of the Law, and many also haue euer beene vnder the Gospell, and shall be euer vnto the end of the World: Among which the great Romish Foxe is the principall. And howsoeuer they bee differing in their errors, and false opinions: yet herein they meete in one, that they bee all subtile Foxes, wasting and destroying the vines of Christ. Here woe may behold the state of
Gods

Gods Church, that there should bee alwayes Foxes that will creepe in among the vines, and if there bee not (as I may say) hunters, to hunt and to catch them, wee may easily perceyue what perill the young grapes be in. Wee are therefore to pray instantly vnto the Lord, who hath planted this vine, that he wil alwayes raise vp wise and vigilant keepers, which may indeed catch these wily Foxes, and therein we come to the fourth point, which is, how they must be taken.

Doubtlesse, the faithfull Ministers of the Gospell, are sayd to catch them, when by the word of God they doe strongly confute their heresies, and by excommunication cast them foorth of the Church. Then seeing Heretikes being conuined; yet continue obstinate, and do sinne, euen condemned by their owne iudgement, as *Paul* sayeth, *Titus* 3. ver. 11. and so will impudently goe forward to destroy the Church, the godly Magistrates are with ciuill and corporall punishments to catch them. Thus wee see the care which the Lord hath ouer his vine, that the Foxes may be taken, which are ready to destroy the grapes, euen in their

their first budding, they would seduce the faithfull, euen while they bee young and weake.

It followeth, *My welbeloued is mine, and I am his which feedeth among the Lillies.* Vpon all those former speeches of Christ which shee repeated, shee doth breake forth into a glorying, not glorying indeed in her selfe, but in him, according to that which Saint Paul alledgeth out of the Prophet, *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,* 1. Cor. 1. ver. 31. And marke what it is that shee gloryeth of, for it is indeed that, in which consisteth her whole felicity, namely the Communion which is betwixt the Lord Iesus Christ and her, and the sweet fruit which she receyueth thereby. This holy Communion is expresse after this manner: *My Welbeloued is mine, and I am his.* Here we must first note, that there is an vnion betwixt Christ and his Church, fro whence commeth this Communion? Hee is her head, and she is by the spirite vnited vnto him, as his misticall body: hee being her head, whatsoeuer is in him, it is hers: and therefore it is sayd, *That hee is made vnto vs of God, Wisedome, Righteousnes,*
San-

Sanctification, and Redemption, 1. Cor. 1. It hath pleased the Father, that in him all fulnesse should dwell, Coloss. 1. v. 19. In him is holinesse, in him is power, in him is life eternall: and all these things doe flowe from him, the head vpon her, for she saith: My welbeloued is mine. Behold then what an incomparable treasure shee doth boast of, when shee sayeth, My welbeloued is mine? For all the riches, the ioyes, and the glory of heauen are hers, for he being hers all is hers: seeing nothing that is good is wanting in him. From hence it is that the Apostle sayeth: Hee will make her to himselfe a glorious Church, Ephes. 5. And then on the other side shee sayeth, and I am his, by this expressing, that as he hath redeemed her with his owne blood, yea, as he hath taken vpon him her sinne, her curse, her death, and hath made her righteous in himselfe, and inheritor with him of eternall glory, so shee doth consecrate her selfe wholly vnto him, she is only his, she forsaketh all other. Shee committeth not whoredome with Idols, she doth not embrace the doctrine of Diuels, shee doth not set her heart vpon the vaine delightes and pleasures of sinne, but shee delighteth in

in him, hee is her ioy, she is pure and chaste and holy vnto him, & offereth vnto him all the sweet and delectable fruites of her faith, and lone towards him. This is that which the holy Apostle sayth, *That he had prepared the Church of Corinth, that hee might present them as a pure virgin vnto one man, euen Christ.* 2. Cor. 11. ver. 2. What shall wee say then vnto those, which wold haue Christ to be theirs, but they will bee none of his? They seeme to boast of a faith in his death, and passion, as if by the same they should obtaine righteousness and life eternall: but they bee vncleane, they liue not vnto Christ, they be not ledde with his Spirite, and therefore they be not his: for what doctrine they professe, they doe not greatly care, and the world and fleshly pleasures are their ioy: fruits they offer vp none vnto Christ. O happie is that soule, which with a true and liuely faith can say, *My welbeloued is mine, and I am his.* And happy are they which say he is theirs, & yet they are not his, they liue not vnto him. Then shee sayeth, *that hee feedeth among the Lillies:* we know that the lillies, are fayre, sweete, soft and pleasant, and therefore the church

K

sayth

sayth, that her Spouse feedeth his flockes among the Lillies: which is to let vs know that hee feedeth her with most excellent things. Most true it is, that ther is nothing vnder heauen that can bee esteemed as a full shadow or resemblance of the heauenly Manna, wherewith Christ feedeth the soules of his: but the Church vseth that which may in some sort resemble it. And now thereremayneth onely the last verse of this Chapter, in which the holy spouse vpon the feeling of those former benefites, concludeth with a vehement prayer vnto Christ, saying, *Vntill the day breake, and the shaddowes flye away. Returne my welbeloued, & bee like a Roe, or a young Hart vpon the mountaines of Bethel.* The summe of her prayer is, that her welbeloued from whom shee receyueth all her comfort would come speedily vnto her, in all her need, all the time of her peregrination here vpon earth, and not by any meanes be separated from her.

Indeed the wordes are mysticall, and her first speech is as much as to say, vntill the morning, when shee sayeth, *Vntill the day dawne, and the shaddowes flye away:* For the night is but the shaddowe of the earth

earth, so that the Sunne comming vnto our Horizon, with his beames causeth all shaddowes to flye away from the vpper face of the earth.

The Church vpon earth, is as it were in the night, as some take it, vnder the shaddowes of the Law, which should, and did flye away after that cleare day of Christs resurrection? For when our Lord was manifested in the flesh, it was a cleare day in comparison of the time of the Law, when they had al vnder shadows: but we may extend this prayer (as I take it) more fitly to the second comming of the Bridegroom, for then indeed shall be the perfect cleare day, then shall all shaddowes vanish, and there shall bee no obscurity, but most glorious light. In the 48. Psalm, where the Prophet speaketh of the wicked, and sayeth, That the righteous shall haue dominion ouer them in the morning, he speaketh it of the day of the generall iudgement, which is the beginning, and even in the morning of that euerlasting most glorious light, in which the Saintes shall dwell. Shee prayeth then, that till that most glorious Morning, while she is heere

in the wildernesse, he will bee like a Roe ;
or a young Hart, that is, that he will come
swiftly vnto her, for her defence and com
fort in all her tribulations.

Her enemies are great, and her frailties
are many, and shee prayeth that hee will
passe ouer all lets of her sinnes, or whatso-
euer, which shee calleth the mountaines
of Bether, that is, of separation. We see
then that this is a most sweet prayer of the
Church, and which euery faithfull soule
doth earnestly powre forth vnto him, that
hee will come speedily vnto them, to de-
fend & comfort them while they be here
in the midst of cruell enemies, of fraile-
ties and calamities. O Lord Iesus come
speedily and saue vs.

THE



The fift Sermon.

CHAP. III.

1 In my bed by night I sought him whome my soule loueth, I sought him but I found him not.

2 I will arise now, and goe about in the Citie, by the streetes and by the open places. I will seeke him whom my soule loueth, I sought him, but I found him not.

3 The Watchmen that went about the Citie found mee: Haue you seene him whom my soule loueth?

4 When I had passed a little from them; then I found him whom my soule loueth, I layd holde on him, and left him not untill I had brought him vnto my mothers house, into the chamber of her that conceyued me.

5 I charge you O daughters of Ierusalem by the roes and by the Hindes of the field, that

ye stirre not vp, nor wake my loue untill shee please.



In the former Chapter the bride made report how her Loue Iesus Christ in most kind manner sought her vp, and called vpon her againe to arise to come forth vnto him from the cares and delights in earthly things vnto the meditation and ioy in things that be heauenly and spiritual. And now in this Chapter she sheweth how she sought after him, hee hauing withdrawne himselfe, and missing of her, yet she ceased not, nor gaue ouer seeking in all places vntill shee found him, and brought him home vnto her mothers house. Heere is then in some respect a diuerse and a differing estate and condition from the former. For the faithfull do not continue alwayes alike, but euen now, Christ shewing himselfe vnto them, and calling vpon them, that are euen rapt and enflamed with the loue and ioy of heauenly things. By and by euen as a kettle vpon the fire, which

which while the flame is vehement doth
see the fast, and as the flame slaketh, so it
cooleth: they waxe somewhat colder,
they fall into some drousinesse and secu-
rity, they feele not the ioyes and delights
which they did, Christ seemeth to be gon
from them. And then being eyther tou-
ched with some affliction, or moued by
some meanes, they doe seeke to feele the
same ioyes that they felt in him before.
They would alwayes feele them: for
they be ioyes that passe all earthly ioyes,
as the Prophet *Dauid*, Psal. 4. sheweth,
That the light of Gods countenance put
more gladnesse into his heart, then the
worldly men had when they receyued
great plenty of corne, and wine, and oyle,
wherewith they make themselues merry.
And how earnestly the holy Spouse doth
seeke after her Welbeloued, her words
will declare, which wee will now come
vnto. First, Let vs consider the external
things, which do represent and figure the
things which are inuisible, mysticall, spi-
rituall, and heauenly. The Church is
compared to a virgine betrothed, who
dwelling in her mothers house in a City,
in which there bee Watchmen that goe

about in the night, and while she is in her bed, her mind runneth vpon her Welbeloued, shee cannot endure his absence, but ariseth out of her bed, and euen in the night walketh about in the streetes of the City for to seeke him. Who will not say that this were a vehement loue, that should cause a damosell to doe this? Indeed in this earthly lotie it should passe modesty: but in the spirituall loue, as we shall see, it is most highly to be commended.

Let vs come then to the particulars, *In my bed* (sayeth shee) *by night*. What is the bed of the Church? Where doth shee lye downe to rest and take ease? It is a drowsie security which the flesh bringeth, and in which all the true children of God, according to the flesh, could be content to nestle themselues, and euen to lye quiet, & warme, were it not that they are moued by the operation of an other spirit then their owne, for euen in this bed she seeketh: There is a worke wrought within, that will not let her altogether forget her bride groome: yea, the godly in that coldnes which cometh vpon them, doe remember what ioyes they haue felte in Christ, and

and oftentimes they doe wish, that they did euen continually feede them. But marke then how yet they seeke him vpon their bed, which is not to be allowed. Most gladly they would tast of his sweetnes, but withall they doe desire to haue ease and pleasure in the flesh: faine would they lye still in their warme bed. This I say, is the thing which wee doe all couet: faine would wee feele the ioyes of heauen in Christ, and faine would wee also inioy the delights of the flesh: we would haue both, but this will not bee: for marke how he sayeth, *In my bedde by night I sought him whome my soule loueth: I sought him, but I found him not.* Shee findeth him not while shee is in her bed, hee will not so be found. He that will finde Christ, must rowse himselfe out of that bedde of carnall ease.

If a man desire and wish to feele the sweetnes of Christ, and will also stusse himselfe with carnall delights, hee shall not taste of him. if hee doe taste, it will vanish. Therefore the holy Bride heere goeth further, and sayth, *I will arise.* Behold shee ariseth out of her bedd to seeke him, for there shee cannot finde him, and
find

finde him shee will. And when commeth shee out of her bed? Even in the night. If there be any time fitte for the bedde, it is the night, and then it is most inconuenient, and most it griueth to come out of the bed. But shee commeth out of her bed, even in the night for to seeke her loue. Rather then she will not find him shee will forgoe and forsake all ease and pleasures in the world.

Is this the true Church? and are these the right Christians? What shall wee say then vnto those which wil forsake no delight, no pleasure to seeke Christ? They haue a desire to feele his sweetnes, but they lye still vpon their bed. O beloued, al you that haue euer tasted, as the holy Apostle *Peter* speaketh, how sweet the Lord is, 1, *Pet. 2.* and doe couet to taste him still, remember continually what is here done: Seeke him, but come out of your bedde. Let not your loue bee so cold, as to bee withelde from seeking the Lord by any carnall delights. And behold yet further, how the spouse doth not only rise out of her bed to seeke her welbeloued, but also goeth forth into the streetes, & open places of the City, seeking all about for him.

Here

Here is a very great loue expressed, heere
is a maruellous zeale. A virgin to rise out
of her bed, and in the vnseasonable time
of the night to walke about in the lanes
and streetes of the City: what inconueni-
ences and dangers might ensue? Well
she casteth no perils, her mind is so set vp-
on her Spouse, that shee cannot rest, her
burning loue towards him thrusteth her
forward to seeke him, whatsoeuer come
of it But may she not seeme to bee scarce
well in her wits? Could she not tarrie
vntil it were day? or might she not haue
patience to expect his coming vnto her.
Surely, the Worldlings doe wonder at
those, which with feruent zeale and loue
doe seeke after Christ Iesus: and they of-
tentimes say plainly, that they bee more
then halfe mad: for when they beholde
how the seruants of God debarre them-
selues from sinnefull pleasures, giuing
themselues to reading, hearing, and holy
meditation in the lawes of God, that so
they may obey him, they wonder as at a
strange thing that they run not with the
vnto the same excelsse of riot, as the holy
Apostle sayeth, and therefore they speake
euill, 1. Pet. 4. ver. 4. When they see men
so

so zealous in seeking Christ, as that neither the danger of their liues, nor losse of their goods can stay them: doe they not say, what madde fooles be these? They will not in any wise buy Christ so deare, they hope to goe to heauen without any such trouble. They see no reason why they should deprive themselues of any pleasures or delights for to seeke heavenly things.

They will not professe the Gospel, so as to bee mocked and pointed at: If any great man do but frowne at them, they lay the Bible aside. I thinke you may easily see the difference betweene these and the faithfull, who heere vnder the person of the Church are sayd to arise out of their beds in the night, and to seeke about in the streetes of the City. These bee not withheld with ease and pleasures, nor yet scarred with perilles and inconueniences. These doe know that Christ is worth the seeking, although they should loose theyr liues for seeking of him, Yea they doe approue the doctrine of Saint Paul, who sayth, *That the light and momentary afflictions of this life, are more worthy the glory that shall be revealed,*

And

And how well the Lord approueth of this loue and zeale in his Spouse, aduenturing herselfe thus to seeke him, you may see by his owne wordes in the Gospell, when hee sayeth. *That except a man deny himselfe, take up his crosse and follow him hee cannot bee his Disciple. And, Whosoener doth not forsake Father and Mother, Wife, and goods, yea, and his life, he is not worthy of him.*

But the Spouse here sayde, *I will arise, and goe about in the City, by the streetes and open places, and I will seeke him whome my soule loneth.* Then she addeth, *I sought him but I found him not.* Here may two questions be demaunded: The one, whether the Church be euer without Christ. The other may be this: whether the Lorde do not deale lesse kindly with his Spouse, in letting her wander about to seeke him, and doth not by and by shew himselfe vnto her? Touching the first, it is out of all doubt, that the Lord Iesus is alwayes present with his Church, but the faithfull haue not alwayes the same liuely feeling of his presence. He seemeth to hide himselfe away, and to bee absent: and then doe the godly labour to haue a more full
and

and perfect sence of his presence, it is his secret worke in them that they seeke.

And now for the other Question, that *CHRIST* doeth suffer his to seeke him through so manie difficultyes, and doeth not at the first shew himselfe, it is not to be imputed vnto any want of kindenesse, or for her hurte, but for her benefite: For, it is for the tryall and exercise of her Faith, her loue, and patience. Yea, it is to stirre vp and to kindle her affection more vehemently for to seeke after him.

Finally, it is to teach all the godly to make precious account of retaining *Christ* with them. For when they are fallen into drowfines, and so haue lesse feeling, it is not so easie a matter to finde the Lord againe. Continue therefore your prayers, and meditations, and all holy exercises, by which the liuely feeling of *Christs* presence is continued.

Well, while shee thus sought him all about, and found him not, the Watchmen that went about the Cittie, found her. The Watch-men in a Cittie doe passe too and fro, to see if there bee any styrring, whereby hurt may arise, and these do finde her now in the streetes. Who may these Watchmen bee? If

If the cittie bee the visible Church (for the Faithfull do dwell scattered in the visible Church, among many counterfeyte worshippers of *GOD*) then these watchmen are the Pastors, who are to watch ouer the cittie, as the Lord telleth the Prophet *Ezekiel*, that hee had made him a Watchman. But then if it bee so, why doe not these Watch-men leade her vnto *CHRIST*, for that is their office and dutie? Surely, it doth often fall out, that the shepherdes themselues, euen the Watchmen ouer the house of *Israell*, doe not know Christ aright, but are blinded with worldly pompe, and couetousnes. Shee doth demaund of them, if they haue not seen him whom her soule loueth? but there is no mention of her answer. Eytther they made none, or else such an answer as could doe her no good. Well, she goeth but a little past them, and shee findeth her welbeloued. Then we see plaine ly, that she findeth him at the last. This is according to the promise. *Aske and ye shal haue, seeke & ye shal finde, knock, & it shal be opened vnto you. For whosoener asketh, receiueh, & he that seeketh findeth, & to him that knocketh, it shalbe opened.* Math: 7. ver. 7. 8.

Here

Heere is a goodly comfort vnto all those which with hartie affection do seeke after Iesus Christ: for though they seem for to lose their labour, yet let them not faint, nor waxe wearie, for in the end they shal finde him. He is not out of the Citty, albeit the blinde Watchmen doe not see him. Hee will shew himselfe most comfortably vnto them that seeke him with an vpright heart, if they giue not ouer. Well are wee if we bee wise and strong in this point, for many there bee which beare the name of Christians, which seeke not Christ at all, but doe despise & neglect all holy exercises.

Others there be which doe seeke, but they doe not continue seeking, they faint they waxe weary, and so giue ouer: because they feelee not the quickning power of Christ, even at the first, or after some short time, they doe euen relent, and giue ouer. Let vs learne here of the Spouse, not to giue ouer, let vs passe all lets, dangers and inconueniences, seeing in the end we shall not misse of him. Wee are often brought into doubt of the truth in some points, because the Sect-masters and heretikes doe make such a shew of
truth

truth for their false opinions. Wee are also clogged with sinnefull lusts, which do disquiet our minds.

Christ alone is to ridde vs from all these snares, and though it seeme long oftentimes before we can get out of them: yet in the end we finde deliuerance: for all that finde Christ are freedde from danger: and he that continueth to the ende he shall bee saued, Math. 24. But now let euery one beware that they seeke the Lord in simplicity and singlenesse of hearts: for such as are puffed vp with pride and vain glory, when they come vnto any knowledge, fall away againe, and many such there haue euer beene. Of all others, a man would take them to bee the most earnest seekers after Christ: and in the end, there is euen the dogg to his vomit. They seemed to eschew the filthy pollutions of the world, with an exceeding great loathing and detestation, and suddenly they doe euen turne backe vnto them, and do become ringleaders vnto sundry kindes of lewdnesse. O wicked pride, and vaine glory, whether doest thou cast men? If they had while they did runne in the way, sought Christ in
L single-

singlenes of heart, seeking indeed to bee ridde of their errors, and to haue all euill lusts subdued in them, they should not haue missed of him.

Behold the cunning of the Diuell in setting them so on worke: for now if we call vpon men to be zealous and feruent in seeking the Lord, they can obiekt, What is become of the vehement seeking of such and such men? O beloued learne of the Church heere, to continue still our earnest seeking, and learne by the fearefull example of those men, how good it is, to seeke with humility, and with all lowlinesse of mind, not glorying in our selus, but in the Lord. Remember that admonition of the blessed Apostle, who sayeth, *With feare and trembling worke out your salvation: for it is God that worketh in you both the will and the deede, of his good pleasure*, Phil. 2. 12. 13. Let vs be afraid of our owne affections which are crooked and peruerse: Let vs not leane vnto our owne reason which is blinde, for if wee doe, then shall we wilfully, and stiffly stand to maintaine our owne opinions: wee shall be ready to shew our wit in maintaining errors. Neyther let vs de-
light

light to haue our owne will fulfilled, but bee ready to deny it, that wee may fulfill the holy will of the Lord.

In a word, let vs feare and suspect whatsoeuer is of our selues, and seeke to be wholly directed and guided by the spirit of the Lord. This is the true, and the right seeking of Christ, and after this manner the holy Spouse seeketh him, and if we continue thus seeking, we shal with her finde him at the last.

Now when she had found him, what doth shee then? She telleth vs here what she did. For marke her speech: *I (sayth shee) layde holde of him, and lest him not, untill I had brought him vnto my Mothers house, into the Chamber of her that conceyued me.* Christ is a most glorious King, is not this then ouer rude dealing, that she sayth, she layde holde on him? May the faithfull vse this boldnesse? Surely the laying hold on Christ is onely by faith, which goeth not with any vnreuerende dealing. and the Lord is so farre off from disallowing it, that it dooth most highly please him. This is the maruellous kindnesse of our Lord, which Sathan would beare vs in mind by his Ministers, I mean

the Papists) to bee nothing so. O say they) it is ouermuch sawcinesse for sinners full men to come directly vnto Christ, and to lay holde on him. It becommeth them in more humble manner to seeke vnto some that be inferiour. Some Saint or Angell which may speake for them: Yea, but doth the holy church here so? no, she seeketh only after Christ, her mind is bent onely vpon him, and vpon him directly, she layeth hold with the hand of faith, and draweth him vnto her. And he doth not condemne it in her as a rude part, but it is her prayse and glory, so to lay hold on Christ, and let not vs bee afraide in this pure sort to lay hold on him for you can no way so highly please the Lord, as by laying hold on him with a true and liuely faith.

When the church had sought him vpon her bed, but found him not, when shee had also sought him about in the streetes of the citie, but found him not: now when shee doth finde him, how earnestly she layeth hold on him. Surely, the Lord doth withdraw himselfe sometime from the godly, and as it were hide himselfe, so that they do not feeble the comfort
and

and peace in him that they would. Then doe they seeke him with care and griefe, then also missing of him, they see what it is to want him, and therefore so soone as euer he sheweth himselfe, they speedilie lay holde on him, as hauing found their onely treasure and felicity. O how the faithfull run vnto Christ, and with what earnest desire they lay hold on him, that they may still bee partakers of his sweete and precious comforts. Here also wee may note the force & efficacie of the true and liuely faith: how it doth not onely lay hold of the Lord, but also keepeth and retaineth him fast, and will not let him go, for so be her words. This is a very maruellous thing, that the Almighty should be so held & retained, euen as it were with a violent force and power. But surely he hath by his couenant and promise bound and tyed himselfe vnto vs, so that whoso- euer laieth hold of the Lord with the hand of faith, it is vnpossible that he should depart from them.

This peradventure will seeme hard vnto some; for it may be sayde, shee layeth holde on him, and will not lette him goe, but if hee would, could

he not haue brake from her? Because you say it is vnpossible that hee should depart from them, that lay hold on him with the *Hand of Faith*. Let men consider, that it is impossible that *GOD* should breake his *Covenant* and promise, it is vtterly vnpossible that God should lye. Well, he hath promised, he hath couenanted and sworn, that all which belecue in his Sonne, shall not be confounded. Wherby it is manifest, that *CHRIST* cannot depart from the soule which belicueth aright in him: wee are not to take these speeches, as if *Christ* would depart from any that trust in him, but onely I do note her speech, when she sayeth that she did lay holde on him, and would not let him goe: declaring with what force shee did holde, and retaine him.

What are wee then more to seeke after, then this same mightie *Hand of Faith*? It is the *Rocke*, against which the *Gates of Hell* cannot preuaile. Matth: 16. It is the *shielde* that quencherh all the fiery *Dartes* of the euill one: Ephes: 6. It is (Saint Iohn sayeth) *Our victorie*, by which wee ouercome the *Worldes* 1 Iohn: 5. Then it subdueth the prince of this *World*, it bringeth vnder

der all the power of the Diuell. And as *Jaakob* did wrestle with the Angell, and would not let him goe: and therefore he called him *Israell*, saying: *Thou hast power with GOD, thou shalt preuaile with men.* Genes: 32.

So all that belieue, bee true *Israelites*, they lay holde vpon Christ by Faith, they wrestle and preuaile with God. Great then is the praise, and the glorie of *Faith*, which if men did throughly waigh and consider, they would not be so colde and carelesse in seeking after it. They would not bee so negligent in reading and hearing of the holy word of *GOD*, with little or no meditation of the same. They would not be so fainte and feeble in prayer, but instantly they would call vpon the *LORD*, to increase their *Faith*: whereby they may thus preuaile by laying holde of *CHRIST*, & retaining him stil with them.

Oh what labour should wee refuse in this thing? How doe men labour and toyle in the world for to get riches which are transitory? Who is able to expresse their industry and care, how they do beate their brains about it day & night! Would to God that we had but halfe so much care, & that

we would indeede take but halfe so much paines to seeke after this rich and incomparable iewell of *Faith*, this *Hand*, which layeth so fast hold on *CHRIST*, that it will not let him goe. Indeed the excellencie of it is in respect of him whom it holdeth.

In Christ there is all fulnesse of good things. *Whosoever is in him, there is to them no condemnation.* Rom:8.1. They be most happie and blelled for euermore: then see what this hand obtaineth.

On the other side, such as bee not in Christ, they bee in their sinnes, they bee voyde and destitute of all good things, they bee vnder condemnation. When Christ is layde open, and published vnto them, so that in some sorte they are made to see wherein all happines resteth, where the onely remedie against all miserie is, yet they are neuer the better, they haue no hand to lay holde on Christ, nor to retaine him, but they doe still languish in their miseries: For that is proper onely to the Church and her children, which is heere spoken: I layd holde on him, and left him not, vntill I had brrought him vnto my Mothers house, into the chamber of her that conceyued mee. Againe,
here

here is an effectuall laying holde on him by the Bryde, so that shee retayneth him to dwell with her for euer, For, that is to bee gathered by this, when shee bringeth him vnto her Mothers house, and into the chambers of her that conceyued her.

The *Faithfull soule* is not contented, neither doth it satisfie her in some sleight manner, to lay holde on *CHRIST* for a time, but shee will leade him home, euen into the inner-chamber of her minde, that so hee may dwell in her, and shee in him. Then shee liueth, or as the Apostle speaketh, Christ liueth in her. Gal: 2. ver, 20.

The holy Ghost calleth vpon men *To open the Gates, and the everlasting doores*, That is the doores of their hearts: *and the King of glorie shall come in*, Psalme 24. She doth here open the gates and the doores, and leadeth him in.

What good thing can bee wanting, where the King of glorie entreth for to dwell? He is the Lord of Hoasts, who is is strong and mightie in Battell. He doth subdue sin & putteth the prince of darkenes to flight, yea, he chaseth away all euill where he dwelleth. No maruell then that she wil not let him go, but leadeth him in-

to the Chambers of her that conceyued her.

This is a great mystery, and a secret : for although men doe professe the name of our Lord Iesus Christ in word, yet for the most part they know not what this meaneth. They know not, I say, what it is to bring Christ home into the Chamber : Hee is in the Heauens, a nearer presence of him they doe neyther feelee nor make account of. Christ indeede is in their mouth, but the spirite of pride, of enuie, of selfe loue, of couetousnesse, of lechery, and of all vncleannesse, yea euen the spirit and power of the Diuell dooth dwell in their heart. Their workes doe declare no lesse, for all their filthy speeches and wicked deedes do manifestly shew that they bee the children of that wicked one. As you may reade how our Sauior doth reason against the Iewes, saying. *Yee doe the workes of your Father, and you are of your Father the Diuell*, Iohn 8. And S. Iohn sayeth, *Bee not deceyued, hee that worketh righteousnesse, is righteous, as he is righteous, hee that committeth sinne is of the diuell*, 1. Iohn 3. vers. 7. 8. If you will then be the true children of the Church, laye hold

hold on Christ, and bring him home into your hearts, that there his life, and power may appeare.

But as it was sayde, heere it may now bee demaunded, what mother hath the Church? W o is shee that conceyued her? Is there any Spouse of Christ but one? I answere, there is but one church, one mysticall body of Christ, and one Spouse: but alwayes that part of the church, which is vpon earth, is called the daughter of the Church of former times. As we see how the generations passe away and euermore there arise vp new, which for the time are as a young virgin, and daughter to the former. There is a continuall succession, and the Church doth euermore bring forth vnto the Lord, so that euermore the church heere in the world may say, shee leadeth Christ into the chambers of her that conceyued her. And here is also to be noted, that shee leadeth him not vnto a strange habitation, but vnto the same, where her mother did entertaine him. For there is one faith, one hope, one doctrine, and therefore euery church for the time vpon earth entertayneth Christ as her mother before her did.

And

And in very deede, if you will approue your selues to be right Christians, looke to the steppes of the ancient Chriilians, euen of the mother churchē vnder the Prophets and Apostles, and doe euen as they did.

And now see what followeth: *I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem by the roes, & by the Hindes of the field, that yee stirre not up, nor wake my loue untill shee please.* I noted before, that it is doubtfull whether Christ or the church did vtter this speech: for the word (*loue*) is feminine, and so may bee taken of Christ. Indeed it seemeth in this place to bee the speech of the Bride: for hauing with long seeking found her welbeloued, and brought him home vnto her mothers house, shee is much afraide, least he should haue any occasion giuen him to depart, or to withdraw himselfe from her, and therefore layeth this straight charge vpon her daughters, euen binding them with an oath, to beware least they awake and stirre him vp before he please: For as I noted before in the other chapter, where wee had this charge euen word for word, The daughters of *Ierusalem* are to take heed least

least by their rude and vnreuerent beha-
uiour, they doe cause the Lord for to
depart, seeing that when hee doth, as it
were, hide himselfe from his church,
so that hee suffereth great affliction, it is
for the euill behauiour of manie,

which professe his name. The

Lord giue vs his aboun-

dant grace, and make

vs carefull to re-

taine him,

Amen.

THE



The fixt Sermon.

CHAP. III.

6 Who is shee that commeth vp out of the wildernesse like pillars of smoake, perfumed with Myrre and Incence, and with all the spices of the Marchant.

7 Behold his bed which is Salomons, three score strong men are round about it, of the valiant men of Israel.

8 They all handle the sword, and are expert in warre, every man hath his sword upon his thigh, for the feare by night.

9 King Salomon made himselfe a Pallace of the trees of Lebanon.

10 Hee made the pillars thereof of siluer, and the pauement thereof of gold, the hanging thereof of purple, whose middlest was paved with the loue of the daughters of Ierusalem.

11 Come forth, yee daughters of Zion,
and behold the King Salomon with the crown
wherewith his mother crowned him in the day
of his marriage, and in the day of the gladnes
of his heart.



He church sought Christ
and neuer gaue ouer see-
king vntill she had found
him, and brought him
home vnto her mothers
house, into the chambers
of her that conceyued her. Christ in-
deed sheweth himselfe present vnto his
deare Spouse here below, but not that she
is to make account that his speciall abode
with her, is here on earth, but that shee
must ascend vp vnto his house, even vnto
the chambers of the heauenly pallace, for
to that end and purpose doth hee come
downe vnto her. Here therefore is shew-
ed the effect of this her finding and lay-
ing hold of him, namely, that hee hath
perfumed her with his sweet graces, and
made her fit and meete to ascend vp with
him vnto his royall pallace which is here
described.

Come then vnto the words, *Who is*
she

shee that ascendeth vp out of the wildernesse &c. The Bridegroom, (as it seemeth) doth vtter this speech, not being ignorant, or hauing the least doubt who shee is, but in way of admiration or wonderment, to draw vs to the due consideration of the greatnesse, and excellency of the thing.

It is no small worke that the Bride, euen the whole company of the faithfull doe in heart and mind ascend vp into the heauens. Our affections, and all the powers of our mind are wholly of themselues bent downewards to this world, euen to the earth and earthly things. It is Christ then that maketh her to ascend vp out of the wildernesse: It is the mighty power and operation of his grace. For marke how when shee had so earnestly sought after him, when at the last shee had found him, when she had layde holde on him, and would not let him goe vntill she had brought him vnto her mothers house, and euen into the chambers, how it followeth by and by: Who is this that ascendeth vp out of the wildernesse? This is that I sayde, Christ commeth downe vnto his Spouse here on earth, that hee may cause
her

her to mount vp into the Heauens, which wee see doth follow: such is the power & effectuall working of his grace. But what is the wildernesse out of which she ascendeth? It is the world, euen the corrupt & miserable estate that we are all in by nature. In a wildernesse there is no tilling, no sowing, no planting, no dressing, no good fruit, but all lyeth waste, barren and desolate. Euen so it is with all mankind, by nature there is nothing but barrennes, God planteth, tilleth and dresseth his church, she is, as Saint *Paul* sayeth, 1. *Cor.* 3. Gods husbandrie. shee is made fruitefull to the Lord: but the whole Worlde beside, out of which she ascendeth, doth remaine as a most desolate and barren wildernesse. There groweth not in it any one sweet thing at all, but all noysome stinking and abominable weedes. All the godly which are here represented vnder the person of the Spouse, doe ascend out of this barren gulf.

And the worke is wonderfull and maruellous, but especially if you marke how shee ascendeth vp. It is sayde, euen *like pillars of smoake*. What meaneth this? That must you gather by the words that

M follow,

follow which are these. *Perfumed with myrrhe and incence, and with all the spices of the Marchants,* or as it may rightly bee translated, more excellent then all the dust of the Marchant.

The godly doe not while they liue here ascend vp in body into the heauens: but their faith, their hope, their loue, their prayers and thanksgiuing, with such like, doe like pillars of smoke of sweet incense ascend vp before the Lord: and all these pillars of smoke of sweet odors arise from hence, that Christ hath perfumed her with the heavenly graces of his Spirit, which he calleth myrrhe and incense, which hee sayeth doth excell all the dust, that is to say, all the sweet spices of the Marchant: Shee is then perfumed with the graces of Christ, and so made sweet and fitte to ascend vp to God in the heauens. Shee ascendeth vp out of a wildernesse, where no good nor sweet thing groweth, and yet shee aboundeth with all sweet perfumes, which ascend vp euen like vnto pillars of smoke,

Is not this a wonderfull thing? From whence hath shee these sweet fruites in the wildernesse? Euen as I tolde you before,
Shee

Shee sought him whom her soule loueth,
yea, shee neuer gaue ouer seeking, vntill
shee found him, shee layde hold on him,
and would not let him depart: and heere
is the fruit of her labour, he perfumeth her
with all sweet and precious things, and
maketh her fit for to ascend vp into the
Heauens. O beloued, shall not this en-
flame our minds to seeke after Christ, and
neuer to giue ouer for any trauell, incon-
uenience or danger, vntill we find him?
Yea to lay fast hold on him, and to retaine
him, that hee may thus perfume vs with
his spirite and gracious gifts, and so make
vs fitte to dwell with him in the Hea-
uens? In our selues, and of our own na-
ture wee stinke, we are loathsome and a-
bominable, fit for the stinking pit of hel,
and not meet for to ascend vp into the
heavenly pallaces. If we finde him, and
as the holy Spouse sayth, lay hold on him
and retayne him, he will indeed perfume
vs, and make vs full of all sweet things,
through which wee shall bee acceptable
vnto God. They are worthy to lye and
rot in their filthinesse, and so with dete-
station to be cast out of the presence of
the Lord, who will not seeke vp so sweete

and gracious a Sauour. What is the cause that men generallly are so addicted vnto this World, so that they doe not ascend vp out of it? And what is the reason that they bee not perfumed with sweet things, but doe cast forth continually the stinke of vncleane and abominable vices: Surely euen this, they doe not with the holy Bride arise out of their beds to seek Christ and neuer cease vntill they haue found him. No, no, there is small and cold seeking after him. I would to God it might enter into our minds, and bee thoroughly fixed in vs, what a treasure shall wee obtaine when we finde him. Some will reply, that they seeke him, but they cannot finde those things which the Spouse here found. It may be (say they) Christ wil not bee found of all that seeke him. They could bee content for to seeke him more earnestly, if they were sure that they should finde him.

Surely, this is the tempter, this is our owne negligence and vnbeliefe, and it is very good for vs to beware of it. Wee see what wonderfull goodly things they attaine vnto which finde Christ, laying holde on him, and not leauing him. Wee
see

see also by the speeches of the Spouse, that he is not easily found. If wee seeke a little, and in cold manner, euen as it were vpon our bed, because we finde him not, wee are ready to imagine, and the Diuell doth also suggest, that it is but lost labour for to seeke him. But doubtlesse all those that seeke him in vprightnesse of heart, & that seeke him diligently and carefully, not giuing ouer, shall finde him. Is it not his promised *Seeke and you shall find, aske and you shall receyue, knocke and it shall bee opened unto you?* For whosoener asketh receyueth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened, Math. 7. 7. 8. If therefore we haue sought, and yet finde not that we are perfumed with myrrhe and incense, sweeter then all the spices of the Marchant, and that wee doe ascend vp out of this barren wilderness, let vs know that we haue not sought so feruently as wee ought to seeke: Let vs then be more diligent.

It followeth, *Behold his bedde which is Salomons. threescore strong men are round about it of the valiant men of Israel. They all handle the Swords, and are expert in warre: euery man hath*

his sword upon his thigh for the feare by night.

It was sayde in the former verse, that shee ascended vp out of the wildernesse: And whether doth shee ascend, but vnto the habitation of the great King her Spouse, to lodge and to dwell with him for euer? Here is therefore vnder a shadow a description of that heavenly lodging. The shadow is taken from the bride bed, and from the Bride-bed of King *Salomon*. For Christ is the true *Salomon*, euen the King of peace, of whom *Salomon* that wrote this Song was a figure. It was, and is the manner, that Kings haue euery night a watch about their lodging, by part of their guard, that there be no treason wrought, but that the King may sleepe without feare. It seemeth by this place that King *Salomon* had euery night three-score valiant men of his guard, expert in battell, and with their swordes girded to their thigh, that did keepe the watch, that so hee might sleepe in safety. And because it falleth out sometimes, that treacheries be committed by some that are put in trust to watch and to guard: heere is mention made, that these are of the valiant men

men of Israel, they bee true hearted and trusty. Needfull it is that they should bee no weak ones, nor no cowardly persons: and more needfull it is also, that they should be in a readinesse, and haue their weapons prepared, and most needfull of all, that they bee such as will not bee corrupted any way, but haue faithfull hearts. If they were mighty and valiant men, and right well appointed, and not of the valiant men of *Israel*, that is to say, sound & true harted, the danger were the greater. But *Salomons* bed is safely guarded with these valiant men of *Israel*, wher by is figured, how safely from all danger and feare, the Church shall rest with Christ in the heauens. Heere bee many enemies which seek to destroy the church Satan the Prince of darkenesse with all his Angels, and with all the infernal powers wayteth day and night to worke all the mischief that he can. Hee raiseth vp cruell and bloudy tyrants which breath out threatnings and terror, as if they wold vtterly separate her from Christ. But when the faithfull haue found Christ, and hee hath so replenished them with the gifts and graces of his Spirite, that they

mount vp into the heauens by a true and liuely faith, with feruent zeale and vehement affection, then howsoeuer they bee troubled, molested, afflicted, and disquieted here in the world, yet they rest safe, and in peace with him aboue. That place is safely guarded, thither can no enemy approach to worke any mischiefe, or to put the Spouse in any feare. He, euen that heavenly *Salomon*, is guarded with his mighty Angels, which are ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for their sakes, which shall inherite saluation, Heb. 1. These be true Israelites indeed, holy, and faithfull: no vnfaithfulnesse can come neere vnto them.

Let vs therefore touching this point remember these words of our Sauiour vnto his Apostles, when he was euen ready to depart from them out of this world saying, *These thinges haue I spoken vnto you, that in me you might haue peace, in the world you shall haue affliction: but bee of good comfort, for I haue ouercome the world,* Iohn 16. verse 33. Then howsoeuer the case doth stand with the godly heere in the world, they rest in safety and peace with Christ. But this is not all which the
Bride

Bride shall obtaine, by her ascending vp out of the wildernesse; vnto the pallace of her Welbeloued, for it falleth out that one may dwell safe from danger, and bee well guarded in a place of small ease and pleasure: marke therefore what a description now followeth of the heavenly Bride-chamber, how rich, how goodly and precious it is to dwell in. For here it is figured by King *Salomons* Bride-chamber. K. *Salomon made himselfe* (layeth our English translation) *a place of the trees of Lebanon*. Some take it to bee a Coach, in which hee was carried with his *Queene*: The word is *apirion*, which is not found else where in all the holy Scriptures. It is deriued of *Parah*, which signifieth to flourish and bring forth fruit. So that most fitly it may bee heere taken for a royall and sumptuous Bride chamber, which King *Salomon* built in his owne Pallace.

The bride chamber (which was for the daughter of *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, whom *Salomon* married, and for whom hee built an house, as the holy Scripture doth witnes, 1. Kin. 19. v. 24) Touching the timber, it was of the trees of *Lebanon*,
that

that is of goodly Cedars. for Lebanon in the Scriptures is renowned for Cedars : That kinde of Wood is very durable.

Then it is saide, that *the pillars were of silver, and the Pavement of Golde, and the Hangings of purple.* Here is a goodly rich thing, and pleasant to lodge in. And then it is added further, *whose middest was paved with the loue of the daughters of Ierusalem,* This is more darke to be vnderstood then the rest. The middest is to be taken for the inwarde partes of this Chamber, which is paved with loue, (that is, as wee may vnderstand it) wrought with louely, or most excellent works, by the daughters of Ierusalem. For so I take it, this latter clause is most fitly to be translated: rather then to say of the daughters of Ierusalem. For hee speaketh of the excellent needle workes, of the stufte and furniture, which the skilfullest needle-women in Ierusalem had wrought. Heere then are all things rich and sumptuous : yea, these things are rare and excellent, euen among the greatest Princes of the world. For the glorie of King *Salomon* did excell, hee being a figure of the heauenly King of glorie, our Lorde Iesus Christ : but they are scarce

worthy to be named, or esteemed to be a shadow of that Heauenly-palace, which is here resembled by them. For what are Buyldings of *Cedar*? what is siluer, or golde, or purple? yea, what are all the finest Needle-workes vnto that Heauenly habitation of Christ, in which his Church shall dwell with him for euer? Wee see also how the new Ierusalem, the cittie of God, is shewed vnto S. Iohn in a vision: *Reuel. 21.* and there described to be most rich and precious, as beeing of most pure gold, shining through like Cristall, and of pearle. Then besides the safetie, that the godly shall rest in with Christ, where no aduerse power shall approach any way to hurt or annoy them, their dwelling shall be also most delectable and glorious.

True it is, that *Salomons* Queene did dwell in a Palace very goodly and sumptuous, and such as the very kings and Princes of the Earth might euer wonder at: so great was the glory and royaltie which his God gaue him. But yet the same Palace that shee dwelt in, and all her glory, was nothing to the Pallace which Christ hath prepared for his beloued Spouse, the church. Then is there sufficient cause to moue

move all the children of God to ascend vp out of this wildernes, vnto this Heauenly palace. And aboue all things, let vs mark this well, into what manner of place, and vnto what manner of person we must ascend vp vnto : for that will put vs in minde, what manner of persons we ought to bee: vncleane persons are not meete to enter, and dwell in such a palace : As it is written, *There shall enter into it no vncleane thing, neyther whatsoeuer worketh abomination or lyes.* Reuel: 21. 27.

And iudge in your selues ; are the vnholie, that stinke in their wickednes, in any sorte to be ioyned vnto the Lord Iesus Christ ? No verily brethren, all that shall dwell with him, must be sweet and cleane. And therefore marke how the Spouse is saide to *ascende vp out of the Wildernes, perfumed with Myrrhe and Incense*, sweeter then all the spices of the Merchant. Shee is decked and made sweete, to goe dwell in such a place, and with such a person.

Oh Lorde, how little is this regarded ? It doeth please men well, to heare that the heauenly Habitation is prepared, and that the godlie shall there dwell with Christ their King in euerlasting glorie.

And

And some other speeches they caste foorth, exprelling a desire to come to the same : but where are they almost, which seeke to bee perfumed, and made sweete, and sitte to goe vp thither?

Doe not manie , which professe that they hope to goe thither, and to dwell with the Lord of glorie : yet still continue in their vncleannesse , and doe not seeke to purge themselues, and to be perfumed with the sweete graces of the Holie-Ghost.

These say that they looke for the life to come : But I pray you, can it bee sayde of them, that they ascende vp perfumed, with Myrrhe and Incense ? There are none that ascend vp to Heauen, but they that are sweete. Such filthie slouens are fitte to dwell in the stinking dungeon of Hell, and thither they shalbe thrust, vnles that they repent, and alter their manners.

Now let vs come to the last verse of this chapter, which is in these wordes : *Come forth ye daughter of Zion, and behold the king Salomon, with the Crowne, wherewith his Mother crowned him, in the day of his Marriage ; and in the day of the gladnesse of his heart.* First, it is not easie to proue or to shew

shew for certaintie, who vttereth this speech. Wee see it is directed vnto the daughters of *Zion*: the summe of it is to incite them to come forth, and to behold the glory of King *Salomon*: and by king *Salomon* is meant the Lord Iesus: hee is the true *Salomon*, hee is the King of peace. It is then his crowne and glory, which these daughters of *Zion* are willed to com forth and behold.

It is not like then that Christ vttereth this, but rather we may take it to bee the speech of the Church vnto all her daughters. Here may arise another doubt: Is Christ this King *Salomon*, that is crowned with honour and glory in the day of his marriage? Is he crowned by his mother? Who is this his mother? And how doth shee set this crowne vpon his head? And when was he married? True it is, that the holy Scriptures doe set forth that Christ, is as yet but betrothed, and that as wee haue shewed before, the day of his marriage shall be at the last day, euen at the end of this world. How then are they willed to behold that glory before it come? I answere that the words may be translated more rightly thus, *In the day of his*

his betrothing. but if we will take it as it is translated, *In the day of his marriage*, ye must know, that faith beholdeth things inuisible, and things to come.

And touching this question, who is that his mother that doth crowne him. Or let it be that the mother of King *Salomon* did in the day that he was betrothed, or when the marriage day was, set a crowne vpon his head: yet this we know, that it is *God which crowneth Iesus with honour and glory*, as we reade Psalme 8. and Heb. 2.9. It is most true that God hath aduanced Iesus Christ, and set the crowne of glory vpon him: that is out of controuersie: and yet withal his mother doth also after a sort set the crowne of glory vpon his head. *Seeing the Church is the fulnesse of him that filleth all in all*, Ephes. 1. ver. 23.

The Church doth honour and glorifie Christ, and the Church sometimes is set forth to be the mother of Christ, Reu. 12. But to let passe these things, let vs consider, that which is the chief and principall matter in this sentence, how we are called vpon to come forth, and to beholde this glory of Christ. For all the faithfull soules bee the daughters of *Zion*. And
looke

looke how the daughters of *Ierusalem*, sitting or remaining in their houses, in their chambers and closets, could not beholde the glory of King Salomon, and therefore they be willed to com forth of their dores euen so, if we will behold the great King in his most excellent glory, we must com out of our selues, otherwise wee cannot see his glory.

We are in our selues shut vp in a dark dungeon, wee are called vpon to come forth into the cleare light of faith, and to remoue away those thick wals of the flesh, which are betweene our sight & Christ. Most true it is, that whosoeuer doe not come forth of themselues, but will seeke Christ in their owne reason and carnall imaginations, they cannot behold his glory. This is a matter of great importance, and by no meanes to be neglected: for if you haue a desire to be drawne out of this vaine world, in our affections and desires, then are wee to goe forth, and to behold the glory of Christ: for what can moue or draw vs more then this, whē we behold the greatnes of his glory, & consider withall, that hee is crowned therewith, euen to this end, that wee may be
parv

partakers with him in the same.

You see then, that it is vnto speciall
purpose that wee are called vpon for to
come forth, and with the eyes of faith to
behold in dayly meditation the glory of
Christ Iesus, in which his Church shall
raigne with him. If wee doe this, we
shall easily despise all the glory &
pleasures of this world, as
drosse. O Lorde
worke it in vs,

Amin.

N

THE



The seventh Sermon.

CHAP. IIII.

1 Behold thou art fayre my loue, behold thou art fayre, thine eyes are as the Doves: among thy lockes, thy hayre is like the flocke of goates, which looke downe from the mountaines of Gilead.

2 Thy teeth are like a flocke of sheepe in good order. which goe up from the washing, which euery one bring out two twinnes, and none is barren among them.

3 Thy lippes are like a thread of skarlet, and thy talke is comely, thy Temples are within thy locks, as a peece of a Pomegranate.

4 Thy necke is as the Tower of Dauid, built for defence, a thousand shields hang therein, euen all the targets of the mighty men.

5 Thy two breasts are as two young Roes that are twinnes, feeding among the Lillies.

6 Vntill

6 Vntill the day breake, and the shadows
flye away, I will goe to the mountaines of
Myrrhe, and to the mountaine of Incense.

7 Thou art all fayre mylone, and there
is no spot in thee.

8 Come with me from Lebanon my spouse,
euen with me from Lebanon, take from the
toppe of Amanah, from the toppe of Shenir &
Hermon, from the dens of the Lions, and from
the mountaines of Leopards.



His Chapter, euen all
the whole except two
verses, the 15. and
16 is the speech of the
Bridegroom, consi-
sting in prayses and
commendations of the
Bride, in declaration of

his loue towardes her, and in promises
made vnto her. These three things bee
exceeding comfortable, and may indeede
if wee bee not too too dull, euen glad our
hearts. For consider that he is the King of
glory, and who is able to set foorth the
excellency of his beauty? Shal it not then
seeme a great thing vnto vs, that he being
in the very toppe and height of all glory,

doth so admire the beauty of the church and is so greatly delighted with it, and promiseth to take her into his presence? This will appeare more in the particulars thus he beginneth to prayse her beauty: *Behold thou art fayre my Loue, behold thou art fayre.* This is a generall commendation, and that which followeth, is a prayse by feveral and particular parts. How great and excellent the beauty is of the whole Church, and so of euery faithfull soule, doth appeare by this, that hee doth as it were wonder thereat, and repeateth and doubleth his speech, *Behold thou art fayre my loue, behold thou art fayre.* For when the Scripture sayth *behold*, it noteth for the most part a thing to be wondred at, and the doubling of the speech doth augment the matter. But here lyeth the chiefe thing to be considered, that such a one as our Lord Iesus dooth wonder at her beauty. Such as be brought vp in a poore base & beggerly condition, if they chance to see one in goodly rich attire, doe wonder thereat. But let the same person so richly decked, come into the presence of a glorious Emperour, and hee doth not wonder, vnlesse indeed the decking bee

exceeding great. The poor and of meane estate may wonder at a little, but hee cannot. Euen so may you consider it in our Lord Iesus Christ, for he dwelleth in glory and beauty vnspeakable, and yet as it were, wondreth at the beauty of his Spouse, which is a ful declaration, that her beauty excelleth.

What should more enflame our hearts vnto vertue and true godlinesse, then this, that it maketh men so fayre and precious in the eyes of the Lord? But whence hath the spouse this beauty? I need not stand to shew againe, that he of one that was foule stinking and deformed, hath made her cleane, sweet and beautifull: for all her beauty is from him. It will further be objected, that this is spoken of the Church militant vpon earth, in which euen the perfectest haue greatest deformities, how then can hee say, *Behold thou art fayre my Loue, behold thou art fayre?* I answer that the Lord beholdeth his spouse, not in her selfe, but in himselfe, that is washed, iustified, sanctified, decked and cloathed vvith his graces. Thus much touching the generall commendation: Nowv to that vvhich is by the particular

N 3

parts

parts, first, we are to remember that all the true believers are knit together by one spirit, and doe make one mysticall bodie in Christ Iesus: 1. *Cor.* 12, *verse.* 13.

So then as there be in the naturall body of a man, diuerse members, which according to their seuerall giftes, haue diuerse functions and operations: the holy Ghost ascribeth the like to the mysticall bodie, as *S. Paul* setteth forth at large, 1. *Cor.* 12.

Then further wee are to obserue, that those are of right singular beautie, which are beautifull and comely in all parts. If one parte be comely, and another deformed, then there is no perfect Beautie. But the Church iustified and sanctified in Christ, is glorious in all parts.

Our Saviour here doth begin with the Eyes, saying: *thine eyes are as the Doves:* as much as to say, thine eyes are like to the eyes of the doves: of all partes in the humaine body, if the Face be not comely, beautiful, and well-fauoured, there is little, or no reckoning made. And of all partes in the face, the Eyes are a principall Ornament if they bee beautifull, and a chiefe deformitie to the whole, if they be not.

Now the Eyes of the Church are heere
com-

mended, by comparing them to the eyes of Doves, which are chaste, simple, and very beautifull to looke vpon. What shall wee take these Eyes to bee ?

It should seeme by *S. Paule, 1. Cor. 12.* that the Pastors and Teachers are the eyes in the Church : For, they are to giue light vnto the whole bodie, through the Heauenly and pure doctrine, and so I take it heere : But I take it rather in this place, that the *Eyes* are true and liuely Faith, in all the godly : for by Faith wee looke vp vnto the Lorde, and beholde things inuisible. Doubtles this *Eye of Faith* is simple, it is chaste, it is very beautifull and precious in Gods sight. *Without Faith it is impossible to please God, as it is written. Hebr. 11. vers. 6.*

Let vs studie and labour then, by all possible meanes to get this precious icwell, & euen to be rich in it. Would you not be glad to cast vp such an Eye vnto the Lord, as hee may be pleased and delighted withall, as with an Eye that is simple, chaste, and beautifull.

The next clause is in these words, *Among thy lockes*, which is expounded diuersly. For some doe take it to signifie that the

locks of hayre hang downe, so as the Eyes do appeare from within them. And other are of this minde, that hee saith, beside thy lockes, or as it were thy lockes remoued.

Howsoeuer it is, this is most certaine, that according to the maner of the attire which the chaste virgins did vse about their hayre for modestie and comelynes, the Bryde is here commended. Then hee addeth, *thy hayre is like a flocke of Goates, which looke downe from the mount Gylead.*

It is taken, that by the hayre, are meant the multitude of the Faithfull, especially when they be assembled to heare the word, and other holy exercises of religion. And it is fitly resembled by a flocke of Goates, feeding vpon mount Gilead. That mountaine was fruitful with wholsome pasture, and a goodly sight it was to beholde a flocke of goates spread all abroad, and feeding therevpon. Where the Lordes people are assembled and are fed with the heavenly foode, it is in his eyes a goodly, and and a comely thing: Also happie are they who with the chosen doe assemble vppon his holie Mountaine, and there taste of the spirituall Foode, to the satisfying of their soules.

In the next place, hee commendeth the Teeth, saying: *Thy Teeth are like a flocke of sheepe in good order, or rather, which are equall, which goe vp from the washing, which euery one bring out twinnes, and none is barren among them.*

As touching the Teeth in the naturall body, the comelynes and beautie of them is in these three things: first, that they bee euen, or of equall length and bignes: secondly, that they bee white and cleane: thirdly, that each rowe answer fitly to the other, and none be wanting.

To set forth these things, they be likened to a flock of sheepe, which be of equall stature, or of an euen bignes, that is for the first. Then that they come vp from the washing: so that being euen newly washed, they be white & cleane, that is the second. In the last place as twinnes, are answerable one to the other, so in the two rowes euery tooth meeteth fit with another, & so there is no gappe, there is none wanting.

Now it may be demaunded. What are the Teeth of the holie Church? To answer this, wee must consider, that the Lorde giueth a Spirituall Foode vnto his Church, which euery Faithfull soule fee-

feedeth vpon. This foode is the Lord Iesus himselfe? *Hee is the bread of life that came downe from heauen.* Iohn 6. And because hee is fedde vpon through faith, *And faith commeth by hearing of the Word* Rom. 10. The holy word of God is called also the food of our soules, for Saint Peter calleth it the *sincere milke which bee willet vs to conet as new borne babes,* that wee may grow thereby, 1. Pet. 2. ver. 1. And Saint Paul telleth the Corinthians, *That they were carnall, euen babes in Christ, and that he gaue them milke to drinke, and not strong meate,* 1. Cor. 3. Where wee may see that the word of God, for the diuerse manner of the deliuering of it, is milke, and it is strong meate.

Here vpon the Teachers are called Pastors, that is to say, feeders of the flocks. Now by the teeth of the Church we may very well vnderstand these graces which are giuen vnto euery faithfull soule, by which the soule hath power to feed vpon the Word, and vpon Christ. Or by the teeth may well be vnderstood the godly and faithfull Pastors, who as Saint Paul speaketh, *doe cut and diuide the word of truth aright vnto the people.*

It followeth, *Thy lips are like a breed of skarlet.* Here are two things commended in the lips, as that they be small, which is resembled by a thred, and that they bee of red colour, and therefore he mentioneth skarlet. And if a virgin be neuer so beautifull, if her speech bee rude and vnpleasant, it disgraceth all: therefore hee addeth, *thy speech is comely.* The speech of man declareth what is in the heart: for our Sauour sayth, *Out of the abyndance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* And a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an euill man out of the euill treasure of his heart, bringeth forth euill things. By nature there is nothing in mans heart but that which is corrupt and abominable, and so in all men, as the Apostle sayeth, *The payson of Aspes is vnder their lips,* Rom. 3. But by the operation of the holy Spirit, the harts of the faithfull are replenished with faith, with loue, with zeale, and with many goodly vertues, and then the speech is according. Wherefore he sayth, *thy speech is comely.*

Let men consider this well, for many men make small reckoning of speech.
Words

Words say they (when they vtter all the vanity and filthinesse of their mind) are no harme.

Tell them that men shall giue an account at the day of iudgement for euerie idle word, and they will iestingly answer, that God hath greater matters to looke after, then to take account of idle words. Let these alone in their filthines, it beho- ueth euery one that will be acceptable vn- to Christ, and beautifull in his eyes, to haue comely speech. Then he addeth, *Thy temples art within thy lockes, as a peece of Pomegranate.* This is to be vnderstood both of the temples, and of the cheekes, & their beauty is commended, that toge- ther with the fayre white there is a mix- ture of red. That he sayeth, *within thy lockes* it is the same word which he vseth before about the eyes. And as I noted, it is ta- ken diuersly. Eyther that the lockes did hang vpon the temples, and so to take it, that they bee within the lockes, or from within the lockes, that is, the lockes be- ing remoued. Howsoeuer it is, as I sayd, before, this is certaine, that the modestie the chaste and comely manner of wearing of lockes is here commended.

In

In the next place hee commeth to the necke, saying, *Thy necke is like to the tower of David, built for a defence, a thousand shields hang therein, even all the targets of the mighty men.* It doth appeare plainly by this place, that King David built a tower in Ierusalem for an armorie: it is translated in our English, for defence: but the word doth signifie, for the hanging vp of sharpe weapons, or weapons that had edge. And therefore is most fitly to be called an Armory. Also that which followeth, maketh the matter cleare, that he sayth, *a thousand shields hang therein, even all the targets of the mighty men.* Then in this Tower were layde vp the chiefe weapons of warre, vntill such time as there should bee vse for them. Vnto this Tower doth the Lorde compare the necke of his Church. It is long, straight, and furnished with goodly things. To apply this vnto some seuerall persons or functions in the Church, I will not curiously stand: but besides the beauty and stately comelinesse, I take it heere is meant the force and power of the whole armour of God, which the holy Apostle Paul setteth foorth, Ephesians 6. which indeede
the

the Lord doth arme all the faithfull withall, that they may be able to stand against all the assaults of the Diuell. The shields and targets of the valiant men of *Israel* were in the tower of *David*: but in the Church is the armour and power of the mighty God.

Now to the breasts: *Thy two breastes*, (sayeth he) *are as two young Roes that are twinnes, feeding among the Lillies.* The breasts in a woman are for to nourish the Infants which she bringeth forth. And the Church is the mother of al Gods children when they be regenerate, she doth nurse them vp, and for that cause there are two breastes ascribed vnto her. Most certaine it is, that whosoever will grow vp in the Lord, he must sucke his spirituall nourishment from those breasts. They bee here highly commended, as to be like vnto two young Roes that bee twinnes. They be like one another, they bee full of very sweet nourishment, as Roes that feede in a pleasant pasture. These breasts of the Church are sayde by Interpretors to bee the two Testaments of the Lord, the olde and the new. And very agreeable to truth it is so to take them, seeing
the

the church doth not bring forth any children to God, nor nourish them with her owne doctrine, but with the most sweet and wholesome doctrine of the Lord. The two Testaments indeed, the old and the new, may very well be compared vnto twinnes, they agree, they both set forth one heavenly doctrine, the one confirmeth the other. If any one will object and say, these doe containe the counsell and will of God, It is onely the doctrine of the Lord which they set forth, how then can they be called the breasts of the Church? I answer that the like may be objected touching any one thing which is praised in her: for all that is beautifull and excellent in her, is of grace, and freely bestowed vpon her by Christ. All the holy bookes then of the olde Testament and of the new, euen the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, are the two breasts of the Church: and from them onely wee must sucke the sincere milke of the word, by which we are to grow.

Thus farre the Lord hath commended his Spouse by seuerall parts, not prosecuting every particular, but adding in the next verse saue one, that *shee is all faire*
and

and no spot in her, which wee will handle ;
when wee come vnto it.

Now to that which followeth next :
*Vntill the day breake, and the shadowes flye
away, I will goe to the mountaine of myrhe,
and to the mountaine of Incense.* Wee haue
in the end of the second Chapter shewed
what day it is which is spoken of, when he
sayth, *vntill the day breake* : for there the
Spouse did entreat her welbeloued, that
vntill the day breake, and the shadowes
flye away. he would returne, and bee like
a young Roe vppon the mountaines of
Bethel.

And here the Bridegroom seemeth
to answer vnto her request. It may be re-
ferred, (as I sayde) to the time of Christs
comming in the flesh, when as indeed all
the shadowes of the Law did vanish, and
flye away, but more fitly to the great day
of the general iudgement, when as indeed
all the shadowes, euen all errors, and all
calamities shall vtterly vanish for euer, and
the Church shall liue in glorious light,
world without end. Now that he sayth,
hee will vntill that day goe to the moun-
taine of Myrre, and to the mountaine of
Incense, it may be taken two wayes. First
the

the heauens are the holy mountaine of the Lord, and there the prayse and honour which the blessed Angels and Spirites of the iust, doe glorifie him withall, is as sweet incense and precious myrrhe. So that the heauens may very well bee called the mountaine of myrrhe, and the mountaine of incense. If we take it so, then it respecteth his ascending into the heauens (as he tolde his Disciples) to prepare a place, where he must (as *S. Peter* sheweth) remaine vntill the time of the restoring of all things. And then will hee come downe to fetch all his chosen, that where he is, there also may they be. Then the second way is, that the mountaine of myrrhe, &c. may bee taken for the church militant vpon earth, which is often called the mountaine of the Lord. And very well it may be called the mountaine of myrrhe, and the mountaine of incense, because, there bee the sweete prayers and prayses of God offered vp, through the mediation of Iesus Christ. And of this mountaine hee sayeth, *Behold I am with you vnto the end of the world. Mat. 28* For albeit our Lord is in the Heauens, yet is hee present with his Church vpon earth

O

earth, highly esteeming the faithfull, and sincere worship and seruice of his people: For this cause hee appeared in vision to Saint *Iohn*, *Reu. 1.* in the middest of the seuen golden Candlestickes, holding the seuen starres in his right hand. The church of *Rome*, as if hee were abent hath set vp one to be his Vicar, to execute his office, euen to giue remission of sinnes, and life euerlasting vnto all men.

This is Antichrist that taketh vppon him to be in Christs stead. But the godly doe by faith find, and feele the presence of the Lord, they dwell in him, and hee in them, they need not, hauing the fountaine it selfe of liuing waters, seeke to these stinking puddles.

It followeth, *Thou art allfayre my loue, and there is no spot in thee* Here is a very great prayse giuen to the Bride, that her beauty is absolute and perfect throughout all parts of her, and that there is no spot or blemish at all. From hence as it seemeth Saint *Paul* draweth his speech, when hee sayeth, that *Christ* gaue himselfe for his Church, that he might sanctifie it, and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word. That hee might make it vnto himselfe a glori-

our Church, not hauing spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blame. Ephes. 5. ver. 25. 26. 27. How shall the Church make any doubt but that shee is loued of God, when shee is become thus glorious and pure, as not to haue in any part so much as the least spot or wrinkle of deformity? For that one word (*mum*) which the Bridegroom: here vseth in the Hebrew text, which is vsually expounded a *spot*. Saint Paul expresth by all these, spot, wrinkle, or any such things.

Then we see that although the Bridegroom: did not goe through all particular parts of his Spouse, to giue them their feuerall commendation, as he did in diuers yet he ascribeth a full perfection of beauty vnto them all, when he sayeth, *Thou art all fayre my loue, and there is no spot in thee.* Such a glorious mysticall body is meet to be ioyned with so glorious a head: and if there were any deformity remaining, how could it be vnited vnto him? But here it will be sayd, how agreeth this with her own speech in the first Chap. where shee sayeth, *I am blacke, but yet comely, and that shee is sunneburnt?* How doth it a

gree with all those places of holy Scripture, which testifie so plainly, that all the faithfull while they liue heere bee full of spots and deformities. I haue answered this before, namely, that men must not consider or esteeme the Church, as shee is in her selfe, or as she is here in the world: but we must behold her in Christ, iustified and fully sanctified in him, and as shee shall be at the day of marriage, when her whole trimming and decking shall be put on. And therefore those Heretiques and Schismatikes, which from those places haue drawne their strong imagination, touching the full purity of the Church, while she is vpon earth, and so haue condemned the true Church for her imperfections and sinnes are much deceyued. It may be sayde then, why dooth not the Lord then rather say to his Spouse, thou shalt be all fayre my loue, and there shall be no spot in thee. I answer, that the scripture for the certaintie of things to come, speaketh of them as if they were present: because God is vnchangeable in all his decrees, and none can hinder his worke.

Now remayneth the last verse of that
which

which I did reade: *Come with mee from Lebanon, my Spouse, come with mee from Lebanon, &c.* This may be expounded two wayes, eyther that the Lord doth promise to shew to his Spouse the land of promise, or that he promiseth to draw her to himselfe out of all places of the world. If wee take it in the former sense, that wee are to remember, that the land of Canaan promised to *Abraham* and his seed was a figure of the heavenly inheritance: then when the sight of this is promised, or the viewing of it from the toppe of those hills, we are to be lifted vp to the consideration of an higher matter, namely, to the beholding of that glorious inheritance which shall last for euer. For by faith the godly doe behold the Land of promise, euen the land of the liuing, which the Lorde in great kindeesse did shew vnto them. If we take it in the other sense (which I suppose is the right) then the promise is this, that howsoeuer his Spouse is scattered and disperfed among the Nations of the world, hee will take her vnto him. You know it is set downe that the Lord will gather his Elect from the foure Windes, and from the very vttermost

parts of the earth. And it is to be marked that hee sayeth, from the dens of the Lions and from the mountains of the Leopards. For the church dweleth here in the world among cruell and sauage beastes, which would vtterly deuoure her : but the Lord, doth miraculously keepe her, and sayeth shee shall come with him from among them.

The Lord draweth vs out of great tribulation, as the Elder telleth *Iohn*, Reuel. 7. verse 14. And as Saint Paul sayeth, *Through many troubles wee must enter into the Kingdome heauen.* Let vs not then faint.



The eight Sermon.

CHAP. IIII.

9 My sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart, thou hast wounded my heart, with one of thy eyes, and with a chaine of thy necke.

10 My sister, my spouse, how sayre is thy loue, how much better is thy loue then wine? and the sauour of thine ointment then all spices?

11 Thy lips, my spouse drop as honey combs honey and milke are under thy tongue, and the sauour of thy garments, is as the sauour of Lebanon.

12 My sister, my spouse, is as a garden inclosed, as a spring shut vp, and a fountaine sealed vp.

13 Thy plants are as an orchard of Pomegranates with sweet fruits, as Camphire, Spikenard.

14 *Euen Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus and Cinamon, with all the trees of Incense, myrrhe and aloes, with all the chiefe spices.*

15 *O fountaine of the gardens, O well of living waters, and the springs of Lebanon.*

16 *Arise O North, and come O South, & blow on my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: Let my Welbeloued come to his garden, and eate his pleasant fruit.*

17 *I am come to my garden, my Sister, my Spouse: I gathered my myrrhe with my spice I eate my hony combe with my hony, I dranke my wine with my milke: Eate O friends, drink and make you merry, O welbeloued.*



He holy bridegroom proceedeth in commending of his bride with rare and singular commendations, as wee shall best see in the particulars.

And first hee commendeth her beauty and decking to bee such, that it hath (as our English Translation sayeth) wounded his heart, Which hee also repeateth for vehemency. If we follow this

this Translation, then wee must vnderstand that his heart is wounded with loue: which is a very vehement speech and dooth indeede fitly expresse the sense of this place, for it is his purpose to expresse an exceeding loue.

But the same sense remayning we may say, thou hast pluckt away mine heart, my sister and my spouse, thou hast pluckt away mine heart with one of thine eyes, &c. For it doth wonderfully set forth the passion of loue, when a Bridegroom shall tell his Bride, that shee hath his heart, or that shee hath gotten his heart. Hereby appeareth the superabundant loue of our Lord Iesus Christ towards his Church: if that there bee not any words sufficient fully to expresse the same. And heere wee may see againe what a glory there is in the simple and chaste, and beautifull eye of faith: as also in those graces and spirituall ornaments: which are the fruites thereof, which are meant by a chaine of her necke. O that wee could thoroughly consider of this, that with a burning zeale our harts might alwayes bee enflamed for to seeke increase of the cleare sight of this pure eye.

I might

I might stand to rehearse many places of the holy Scriptures, which do commend faith: but none beyond this, that Christ sayeth, that his spouse hath pluckt away his heart, or that shee hath gotte his heart with one of her eyes. O how dooth the Lord delight in faith? If faith bee one of her eyes (may some say) which is the other? I answered, that because the Church is brought in vnder the person of a woman there betwixt eyes ascribed vnto her, but withall wee must know, that faith is the one and the other. The holy Ghost sayeth: *That the Gospell is the power of God to saluation. vnto eueryone that beleeueth, to the Iew first, and then to the Grecian, adding this reason, that the righteousness of God is reuealed in it from faith to faith,* Rom. 1. 17
18. speaking as if there were a double faith, when as indeed there is but one faith but the same weaker and stronger. And so in regard of the same encrease of the liuely faith, it may be called two eyes, as that place sayth, from faith to faith. In the next place hee sheweth how delightful and pleasant her loue is vnto him: he doth expresse it by the way of admiration, and wonderment saying, *How sayre*

is thy loue, my sister, my spouse? How much better is thy loue then wine? It is out of all doubt, that all good things come vnto vs, and vpon vs from the loue of Christ, but contrariwise our loue towards him can add nothing vnto his fulnesse, and therefore poore soules, euen simple creatures heere vpon the earth that doe loue him, haue these temptations every one of them at one time or other: I loue Christ Iesus from the very bottome of my heart but what regard can he haue of the loue of such a poore silly wretch as I am? What can my loue be in his eyes? I feele indeed that I loue him with a loue vnfained. Behold here beloued, vnto your comfort, what hee pronounceth of the loue where with euery faithfull soule doth loue him, how sayr is thy loue my sister, my spouse? How much better is thy loue then wine? In hath beene noted in the first Chapter, that wine is put for all dainty things in a banquet, whereby it is manifest, that the loue wherewith we loue the Lord Iesus, is maruellous accepted vnto him.

Let vs come to this, to be sure that we loue him (not after our own fantasies) but with the true spiritual loue, and then what
soeuer

soeuer temptation ariseth to discourage vs, let vs bee out of doubt that our loue is precious, delightfome and acceptable vnto him. O will some say, how shall I know that I loue the Lord Iesus Christ with this sincere loue, which he sayth here is so beautifull in his eyes, and so much better then wine? I would faine loue him. I answer, thou knowest what is written : *If yee loue mee, keepe my commandements*: yea there ariseth all the doubt, for who is it that doth not dayly transgresse the holy commaundements of God? Wee must therefore looke to this, how can wee say with S. Paul, Rom. 7. *I delight in the law of God touching the inner man*. If we loue the truth, if we loue holinesse, righteousness and purity: And if our soule do loath and abhorre that which is vnpure & vncleane, though it sticke so fast in vs, that wee cannot wholly cast it off: Let vs be out of all doubt that we loue the Lord. O happy and blessed then are we, our loue cannot be lightly esteemed in his eyes. In deed such as do perswade themselues that they doe loue the Lord, and doe not in the zeale of purity loath & detest iniquity from the bottome of their hearts, but
can

can take pleasure therein, are vitterly deceyued.

You know that Saint *Iohn* casteth such downe as lyers, that say: *They loue God, and keepe not his commandements. The fauour of her oyntment, which hee sayeth, is better then the saucour of all sweet spices,* is to bee vnderstood of those heavenly gifts & graces of the holy Ghost which are bestowed vpon the faithfull, and for which they be called Christians. There bee indeed very many which professe in word that they be Christians: but they know not what it is to bee a true Christian. For where is the sweete fauour of their oyntments? What graces of the holy Ghost doe appeare them? Nay, in stead of these they doe in all places where they doe become, cast forth a loathsome stinke of their filthy words and wicked deedes. O beloued, let no man seduce and deceyue you. You haue many now a dayes which are come to this depth of impiety, that whosoeuer will not ioyne with them, to stinke in filthinesse, they by and by, in reproach terme them Puritans. This blasphemy the Lord God will powre foorth his vengeance vpon one day, although
his

his long suffering be such, that he seemeth not to regarde it, But as it is written, *He that is filthy, let him be filthy still*: Let them passe that we may returne againe to the commendation of the Bride.

Thy lips (sayth he) *my spouse droppe as honey combes, koney and milke are under thy tongue, and the saour of thy garments, is as the saour of Lebanon.* Here are in this verse two things highly prayfed, her speech and her sweet saour. The former of these euen her speech, is compared to the dropping of the honey combes: as the sweete drops of honey that distil from the honey combes, so be the words that come from her mouth: for he sayth, *thy lippes droppe as the honey combes.* And further, her speech is not onely most sweet, but wholesome & nourishing, which is exprelled in these words, *Honey and milke are under thy tong: Honey and milke are for nourishment.* These are excellent commendations, in which wee may note, what an alteration is wrought in the regenerate, and how farre they are changed from that which they were in themselves by nature. Our Sauior sayth in the Gospel (as you know) *that out of the aboundance of the heart, the*
mouth

mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an euill man out of the euill treasure of his heart bringeth forth euill things: the tongue vttereth but that which is within. And what that is in the vnregenerat and naturall man, heare what Saint Paul alledgeth: *Their throat is an open Sepulchre, with their tongues they haue decciued. the poyson of Aspes is vnder their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing, and bitterness.* Rom. 7. 13. 14. Is not here a greate difference? For curling and bitterness, whereof the mouth was full, the lips now droppe as the honey combes. In steed of the poyson of Aspes, vnder their lippes, honey and milke are vnder their tongue: Is not here I say, a wonderfull alteration? For are not they which are regenerat and sanctified in Christ Iesus, much altered from that they were of themselves? when as for cursing and bitterness, and for the poyson of Aspes, their lippes doe droppe as the honey combes, and honey & milke are vnder their tong? Let vs consider of it yet more particularly. A naturall man hath nothing in him, but meere rebellion against God: his heart is euill, stuffed full

of

of bitter enmity and hatred, both of God and man. His words doe dishonour and blaspheme God, and they hurt and destroy men: On the other side, a man led and guided by the good spirite of the Lord, hath in him the loue of God, and the loue of men. Pure words do flow from him, he confesseth the truth, the Law of grace is vnder his tongue, hee vttereth the prayse and glory of God, he doth instruct and edifie men: euery way his words are sweet, yea they be most wholesome and nourishing, they be (as it is here sayde) honey and milke. Where shall we finde these lippes which droppe as the honey combes? Where be those tongues vnder which there is honey and milke. What need that question will some say. They be the lips and tongue of the Church, the lips and tongue of Christians. Goe among them, and see if their lips doe not drop as the honey combes. If wee should againe demaund, whether shall wee goe to seeke out those christians, whose speech is so sweete and so wholesome? Some man will say, they be euery where, I hope wee be all Christians, God forbid else, say they? Then shall wee finde that euery
where

where mens lips doe droppe as the honey
combes, and that honey and milke are
vnder their tongue. What are then these
sweete and wholesome words, euery
where to be heard? Are they not the
smooth flattering and dissembling spee-
ches which many do vse? are they not the
lyes and slaunders of the multitude? Or
be they not the bitter reproaches, curses,
taunts, and reuilings, which ouerflow in
all places: or the vaine, babling, gi-
bing, and iesting, mixed with bawdy
wordes: These be the things which the
lips of thousand thousands doe droppe, &
a man shall finde almost nothing else in
all places, euen among those which pro-
fesse themselves to be Christians, and to
be of the true Church. O Lord if this be
the true Church, which Christ doth heere
describe (as it cannot be denyed) where
shall we finde her? Surely they bee but e-
uen a few among the multitude, euen sca-
tered here and there, whose lips droppe as
the honey combes, vnder whose tongue
is honey and milke. *Whose speech as S.*
Paul willeth it should be, is alwayes graci-
ous, powdered with salte, so knowe howe
to answer every man, Col. 4. 6. Even such as
P may

may minister grace to the Hearers, Ephes 4, 29. O let vs not then deceiue our selus brethren : If our talke bee vaine and filthy, are we the true childre of the church? Shall it then be sayde of vs, thy lips dropp as the honey combes, honey and milke are vnder thy tongue, seeke to haue clean hearts that your words may be sweete? In the next words hee comendeth her good fauour : *The fauour of thy garments is as the fauour of Lebanon.* Lebanon was a place in which there did grow such sweete things, as cast forth a delightful fauour. The Bride is perfumed with such graces, that all her garments doe smell sweete : This is not meant of the bodily cloathing: for many of the Saints haue liued in po- uerty, clothed in simple apparrell, yea e- uen in stinking prisons and dungeons : But it is to bee vnderstood of the spiritu- all cloathing, where the filthy ragges of the old man are put off, and the new man is put on. *Which is renewed in knowledge, af- ter the image of him that created him.* Col. 3, ver. 9. 10. This is the cloathing of which it is sayde, *Thou hast a few names in Sardis, which haue not defiled their garments : and they shall walke with me in white, for they are worthy,*

worthy, Reuel. 3.4. Hee was cast forth from the marriage that wanted the wedding garment, Math. 22. For let a man neuer so impudently thrust in himselfe in his stinking clothes, to be as one of the Church, yet he shall bee thrust out: for the garments of the bride are sweet, even as the saour of Lebanon. Al at this wedding haue their garments very sweet. Thus haue wee seen very great commendations of the Church: but yet here are further: for it followeth: *My sister, my spouse, is as a garden enclosed, as a spring shut vp, and a fountaine sealed vp.* Here bee two similitudes that doe set forth her prayse: The one is of a garden that is enclosed: the other, of a spring or fountaine shut vp and sealed.

This inclosure, this shutting vp, and sealing, is first to commend the chastitie of the Church, that with a firme faithfulness keepeth her selfe onely to Christ. There is no entrance for any beside him. She loueth, she obeyeth, and worshippeth him, and vnto him she reserueth all her fruites. She doth not worship strange Gods, she runneth not a whoring after Idols, shee is inclosed and sealed vpper
P 2 onely

onely vnto her welbeloued. Here is (I say) the chastity of the Bride. Then secondly it sheweth, that none other are partakers with her in those heavenly treasures, which she receiueth through Christ. There be many in the visible Church, which seeme to be partakers, and make a great shew: but the trueth is, none are blessed, but onely the Elect.

Then further, wee must obserue, that heere are ioyned together a garden full of sweet plants, and a spring and fountaine of liuing waters. If the bed & plants in a garden be not watered, there can nothing grow, but all will wither and bee fruitlesse. This garden therefore is well watered, there is in it a spring of liuing waters which alwayes doe flowe: wherewith euery plant and precious hearbe is watered. These waters, albeit they abound, yet doe they not flow forth of the garden, they bee shutte vp and sealed, none other plants are watered by them. What be these waters? Euen the holy and pure word of the Lord: the wholsome doctrine of the Scriptures. With this are all the sweet plants of the Lords garden watered, according to the saying of S. *Paul,*

Paul, I haue planted, Apollos hath watered:

1. Cor. 3. ver. 6. Wherewith did *Paul* plant or wherewith did *Apollos* water, but with the liuely word of the Lord? or wherewith shall any plant grow vp to bring foorth fruit vnto the Lord, but with the same word? you haue many indeed that regarde not this, which yet take themselues to be good plants, but they be vtterly deceyued, they bee but bastard stockes that bring forth sowre and bitter fruites. For if they will grow and bring foorth good fruit indeed, they must be continually watered with this fountaine: they must receyue in the wholesome word of God into their hearts and soules.

Now some man may here obiekt, that the doctrine of Gods word doth flow forth vnto all, it is not as a fountaine sealed vp. Doe not many reade it, heare it preached, and professe it, which yet are not saued? I answer, that indeed after a sort the word of the Lord doth flow forth ouer multitudes, which are not the true plâts of the Lord, but shal be plucked vp: but it doth not water them, they haue not the effectual working of it to make them grow & bear good fruit: they haue (at the

cast some of them) a taste thereof: but as water that falleth vpon a rocke, doth onely wette the outside, and not soften the rocke or the stone within: so their hearts remaine still hard as flint, and it doth not water them.

This is it then, the word of God is common vnto many: but touching the liuely efficacy thereof, to regenerate, to plant, to water, and to make fruitfull, it is peculiar to the holy Church. She onely is that way, the fountaine in which this liuing water remayneth: her plants bee al watered with it, and made fruitfull. If thou doest feele that the pure doctrine of God doth change thy heart and soften it, so that in steade of those stinking vices, which are in it by nature, thou dost bring forth vertues, then is not the fountaine sealed vppe vnto thee: but if thou heare and heare, and reade, and be not reformed the fountaine is still sealed vnto thee, yea verily, the fountaine is still sealed vp vnto thee: thou art not by reading or hearing the holy word watered, made to grow and to bring forth fruit.

Thus may wee see how the Church is chaste vnto Christ, bringeth forth her fruit

fruit onely to him, and watereth no plants but her owne. And what plantes these are, the two next verses doe shew: for here are reckoned vp all manner of the best plants. *Thy plants (sayeth hee) are as an orchard of Pomegranates with sweet fruits as Camphire, and Spikenard. Euen Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus, and Cinnamon, with all the trees of incense, Myrthe and Aloes, with all the chiefe spices.* Heere is the goodliest garden that euer was heard of in which be all these sweet plants: here be sweet fruits, here be all the chiefe spices, and the sweet incense, here is whatsoeuer is delectable and precious.

I mind not to stand vpon these in particular, to shew the excellency of euery of them, for that is needlesse: onely take the similitude in generall, as if there were a goodly garden, in which were all the most precious plants vnder heauen, that do bring forth the sweetest, the most wholesome, the most dainty and comfortable things that are in the world, and to this Christ likeneth his Church, euen his garden enclosed. By these goodly plants then are meant all the faithfull, they be the Lords plants, they do beare all these sweet

and delectable fruites before mentioned. What a goodly garden hath the Lord planted to himselfe? These plants haue been planted by the Lord in all ages, by the ministry of his holy Prophets and Apostles, and by the ministry of al faithfull pastors and teachers: as we reade how *Paul* sayeth of himselfe, I haue planted. These plants hath the Lord also watered from time to time, by the hands of the same his seruants, euen with the pure waters of heauenly doctrine: as it is written, *Apollon* watereth. From hence the fruites aboue mentioned haue sprung as the sound knowledge of God, true light, sincere & liuely faith, stedfast hope, with vnfayned loue to God and men, inuocation of the name of God, praise and thanksgiuing vnto his holy Maiesty, humility, meekenes, gentlenesse, long suffering, with all the workes of mercy, which proceedeth from a sanctified heart, are sweeter before the Lord, then all incense of the best spices: Happy, yea thrice happy are all those men whome the Lord hath vsed, and doth vse as his faithfull instruments to plant and to water such a garden, and to make it bring forth such fruits.

What

What greater, or more worthy worke can there be in the World? Great shall their reward be before the Lord God, which are found faithfull Labourers. Let all the Ministers of the gospell consider well of this place, and esteeme it a far greater blessing then if they had all worldly dignities and preferments when their labours are fruitfull in planting and watering the plants of this garden.

And let them not be discouraged, that the blind world seeth not the glory of this worke, but despiseth and reproacheth it. Neither let the terrors which Sathan doth rayse, daunt, or dismay them. If a man with all his labours may plant but even some very few of these excellent plants, which are so deare and precious in the eyes of the Lord, or water them, so as they become fruitfull in those forenamed fruites, what a glory is it? What should a Minister of the gospell looke after besides this? On the other side, let the destroyers and layers wast of this garden of the Lord, or such as hinder the growth and fruitfulness of the young plants, behold here what an heauy iudgement of Almighty GOD
han-

hangeth ouer their heades. O how grievous is it in the sight of the Lord which they doe? Let it be that an earthly Prince had such a garden with plants of Pomegranates, with sweet fruites as Camphire, Spikenard, Saffron, sweet Calamus, and Cinamon, with all the trees of incense, Myrrhe and Aloes, with all the chiefe spices, and men should enter into it, and destroy or lay it waste, would he endure it at their hands? How then will the Lord of Lords abide that such wicked men shall destroy or hinder his plants, which so far passe those earthly plants in price, and not bee reuenged? You know what a woe our Saviour in the Gospel doth denounce against him that shall offend one of those little ones that trust in him saying. *It were better for him that a Millstone were hanged about his necke, and that he were cast into the bottome of the sea.* How small regard of the people of God haue some had, esteeming them little better then swine? What care they for planting or watring, they know not how precious the plantes be? They esteeme themselves highly, the garden which they be in, they weigh not how they lay wast.

Let

Let vs proceede, as it is a most worthie worke to be a true planter or a waterer of this garden, which is so goodly and precious in the eyes of Christ: so is it a most happy thing to be a right plant. And here let euery man looke well vnto himselfe: we all professe the name of Christ, and so to be plants in this garden. Looke to the fruits before named, which the right plants do bring forth. They be not pride vaine-glory, nor selfe loue, they bee not cursing and swearing, lying and staundering, they be not dicing, drinking, and whoring, they be not enuie, hatred and malice, or a number such like. These bee stinking and abominable fruites before the Lord. If thou beare such, what shall it auayle thee that thou standest for a time as a plant in the Church? For thou shalt bee rooted out. True it is that in the visible Church there be many stinking & noysome weedes, many bastard plantes, which bring foorth most noysom fruites they doe hurt and hinder what they can, the true plants, but the Lord doth put difference, he will root them all out, and preferue euery true plant. It dooth then stand vs greatly vpon, to looke what fruit

we bring forth, and to endeaour to be approued as true plants. Away with those filthy rotten and stinking workes of the flesh, and walke in the fruits of the spirit. And now in the two next verses, the Church maketh answer vnto her spouse.

In the former verse (whereas the Lord had prayſed her to bee so sweete a garden, so well watered, and of such precious plants) shee ascribeth all the prayſe thereof vnto him, in these words, *O fountaine of the gardens, O well of liuing Waters, and the springs of Libanon.*

The vniuersall Church is but one garden, and all the particular Churches bee gardens, so that her speech and his do not differ, when he calleth her a garden, and she calleth him the fountaine of the Gardens, when he calleth her a fountaine sealed vp, which doth water all the plantes, she doth acknowledge the truth thereof vnto his prayſe, affirming that he is the fountaine of the gardens, that is, look what soeuer waters of life bee in her, yea euen in all particular churches, they flow from him, he is the fountaine. What neede I stand hereto rehearse vnto you those places of Scripture, which doe affirme, that
in

in him is all fulnesse and that of his fulnes we do receiue, that hee is made vnto vs of God, Wisdome, righteousness, sanctification and redemption? The Bride doth acknowledge all here in one word, vvhem she calleth him the fountain of the gardens. This is the prayse and the glory, which all the faithfull doe giue vnto Christ Iesus, not challenging any part of goodnesse to themselves. Then that she calleth him a well of living waters, and streames that flow out of Lebanon, or as it may be expounded, that they be springs flowing, which doe excell: those that flye from Lebanon, from whence it is manifest, by this place did runne cleare springs of water: and living waters are those that alwayes doe flow as the springs, opposed vnto standing waters.

Then the sense is this, that the graces and the waters of life which doe flow from Christ vpon his church, are such as can neuer be dried vp, they flowe from a bottomlesse fountaine, albeit hee bestow his graces and giftes from time to time, in neuer so great measure, yet they bee not diminished. The Romish church hath vtterly swarued from this &
see.

seeketh vnto other Mediators to obtaine the things which appertaine vnto righteousness and saluation. They will not ascribe this glory vnto him, that hee is the fountaine of the gardens, and Well of liuing waters, they be not the Bride which here speaketh.

And now let vs come to the other part of her speech, which is exprelled in the next verse, wherein shee maketh earnest prayer. *Arise O North winde, and come O South wind, blow vpon my garden, that the spices thereof may flowe out: let my welbeloued come to his garden, and eate his pleasant fruit.*

There be two parts of this prayer: In the first shee craueth the inspiration, and gracious gifts of the holy Ghost, that the sweete fruites in her may more abound: In the second part shee desireth the presence of Christ. I will not stand curiously vpon the nature of these two contrary winds, the North wind, and the South wind, but take that which is the principall, namely, that the holy Ghost is figured by the winds. For the North winde, and the South wind, which blow vpon the trees, and which are felt of our bodily senses

seners, are not the windes which blowe vpon the heavenly plants. It is an heavenly breathing which shee here requi-
 reth, euen the inspiration of the Spirite of grace, which is the spirit of sanctification, the spirit of adoption. Without this fruit there is no quickening, no life, no fruite in the Church, and therefore the faithfull doe rightly call for the North winde, and for the South wind to blow vpon them that is to be enspired with all graces and gifts of the holy Ghost, that so the sweete fauour of their fruits may flow forth: for according to the treasure of the spirite, which men haue receyued, so are their fruites.

When that the Lord did expresse the great and special edification of his church, he sayde by the Prophet *Ioel*, *I will poure forth of my spirit vpon all flesh*, which *S. Peter* alledgeth, *Act. 2.* And when the Lord denounceth his iudgement, that the course of his gospell should bee stayed, which he giueth by the inspiration of the holy Ghost. *Saint Iohn* seeth in a vision foure Angels holding the foure windes, that they should not blow, *Reu. 7.* Well the matter is this, all the true beleeuers haue

haue receyued the spirite of God, they are inspired by the holy-Ghost: but yet their faith, their hope, their charitie, their knowledge are not perfect. The Flesh is not wholly and fully mortified in them, the vertues which are called the fruites of the spirite; which are so sweete and precious before the Lorde, are not growne to their full perfection: and therefore being desirous to bee more perfect, they crie out to haue the Northwinde and Southwinde to blow vpon their Garden: That is, to haue the inspiration and heauenly breathing of the holy Ghost vpon their hearts, for there is the Garden. And vnto this garden they desire to come, saying; *Let my Welbeloued come to his Garden.*

Our desire indeede ought to be continually, that wee may haue our hearts sanctified, and purged by the operation of the holie Ghost, that so the Lord Iesus may dwell in them. Doe you imagine that the heart of that man, which is full of pride and vaine-glory, of couetousnes and selfeloue, of Fornication and vncleannesse, or such like is a garden for the Lord to dwell in? No, no, the diuell dwelleth in such gardens. Those stinking flowers, delight
his

his nose. Looke to it beloued, whether there growe sweete Flowers, or stinking weedes in your hearts: for, thereby you shall know whether they bee the Gardens of Christ, or the gardens of the diuell.

And now let vs come to the last verse of that which I read vnto you, which is the aunswere of Christ vnto her desire, that he would come to his garden. The Lorde cannot deny the godly requests of his chosen, and therefore he sayth: *I am come to my Garden, my Sister, my Sponse, I gathered my Myrrhe with my spice, I eate my Honny-combe with my Honny, I dranke my wine with my milke, eate; Oh Friends drinke, and make you merrie, Oh well-beloued.* Beholde here how CHRIST doeth Feast and banquet with his Church: her Faith, her loue, and all the good fruites that spring from the same, are as Myrrhe and Spices, the Honny combe and honnie, wine and milke.

This is plaine and easie to bee vnderstood. But how is this, that hee willeth his Friends to eate and be merrie? Doth not the Church bring forth fruits onely to Christ? Doubtles the Church doth bring forth her fruits onely to Christ her Bridegrome, but yet the Friendes of the Bride-

Q

grome

groome, euen the holy Angels, and the faithfull Ministers of the Word, haue ioy and reioycing, and glory thereby. The Church cannot by her faith and good works glorifie Christ, but the benefite thereof doth redound to the ioy and felicity of the Angels in heauen, and wel may they be sayde to eate and drinke, and to be merry.

This is cleare, and therefore I will not stand to shew what *Peter* speaketh of the desire which the Angels haue to beholde the accomplishment of all things between Christ and his Church, *1. Pet. 1.* Neyther the triumphant ioy of those heavenly companies at the marriage day, *Reu. 19. v. 7.* Happy and blessed are all they which come to this banquet.

The Lord bring vs vnto it for his mercies sake, Amen.



The ninth Sermon.

CHAP. V.

1 I sleepe, but mine heart waketh, it is the
 voyce of my welbeloued that knocketh, open vn-
 to me my sister, my lone, my done, my vndefiled
 for my head is full of dew, and my lockes with
 the drops of the night.

2 I haue put off my coate, how should I
 put it on? i haue washed my feet, how shall I
 defile them?

3 My Welbeloued put in his hand by the
 hole of the dore, and mine heart was affectio-
 ned towards him.

4 I rose vp to open to my welbeloued: and
 my hands did droppe downe myrrhe, and my
 fingers pure myrrhe vpon the handles of the
 barre.

5 I opened to my welbeloued: but my wel-
 beloued was gone and past: mine heart was

Q 2

gone

gone when hee did speake, I sought him, but I could not finde him, I called him, but hee answered me not.

6 The Watch-men that went about the Citie, found mee, they smote me, and wounded me, the watch-men of the Walles tooke away my Vayle from mee.



He had in the former Chapter almoste nothing but the prayes and commendations which Christ giueth to his Church: So highlie, and with so manie speeches doeth hee magnifie and extoll her beautie and Excellencie. Here in this Chapter wee haue another manner of Song, euen an accusing and a bewayling Song: For, here shee accuseth herselfe and bewayleth her great offence, her vnkindnes and vndutifulnes, which she shewed towards her most kinde and louing Spouse: reporting also the great affection & calamitie that light vpon her by that meanes.

It is a straunge thing that there should be such a sudden alteration: but this is the

the state of the regenerate, euen now enflamed and rapt with a burning loue and zeale of Christ : by and by, all seemeth to be smothered and almost quenched.

This is the Battell in them, betweene the Flesh and the Spirite : this is from the imperfection, that is in all the Saints.

But now let vs come to her wordes :

I sleepe (sayeth shee,) but mine heart waketh : Beholde the holie Virgin heere falleth a sleepe (for so shee sayeth) but not (as wee may say) into a dead sleepe : for her heart is waking. Shee doth but slumber as one that is halfe a sleepe. We must consider here three things especilly, what this sleepe is, whence it proceedeth, and what the effects thereof be.

Touching the first, it were great folly for any man to take it of the bodily or naturall sleepe: seeing the Church is to be considered altogether, according to her spirituall and heauenly birth. It must needs then be a spirituall slumber, euen a drowsinesse in the heart and minde, touching heauenly things. This proceedeth from the remnants of the old man in the godly. *The Flesh (sayth the Apostle) lusteth against the spirite, and the Spirit is against the Flesh,*

and these are contrarie the one to the other, so that yee cannot doe the things that ye would: Galath. 5. vers. 17. When these concupiscences, these corrupt and worldly lutes waxe strong, and doe seeme euen much to preuaile, then is there a damping of the spirituall graces, euen as it were a slumber, that falleth vpon the minde: I neede not stand vpon this.

Now what effects doe follow, may easily be gathered: Faith hath not the full and liuely operation, Loue sheweth not her heart: Prayer waxeth feeble. The ioy and delight in all holy exercises is decayed, and so the practising of vertue is but slender. But here is not all: For the holy Scripture in sundry places calleth vpon vs, to take heede that wee fall not into this sleepe, but that wee wathe, shewing great danger that may ensue. *Be sober & watch* (sayeth the Apostle) *For your aduersary the diuell goeth about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whome hee may deuoure.* When wee bee asleepe, the diuell steppeth in to leade vs vnto manie sinnes. And surely the regenerate in their sleepe and securitie doe commit and beare with much vanitie, and many sinnes, they go smoothly away withall. They

They are not in this sleepe so much grieued as they ought to be when the Name of God is dishonoured. Yet here is one speciall thing to be noted, that when she was a sleepe, yet her heart was waking: what of that? Or, what doth that shew vnto vs? It sheweth plainly, that the true and liuely Faith, and the spirite of Sanctification are neuer vtterly extinguished. The worke of the Newe byrth can neuer be quite put out: a most singlar comfort.

The Faithfull doo fall oftentimes into great security, negligent they are in performing holy dutyes: yea, they doo commit grieuous sinnes (as *Dauid* in his securitie did commit adultery and murther) but yet the heart waketh, there remayneth somewhat within, the sleepe is not deadly: all Faith, all Loue, all Zeale is not gone, howsoeuer the Lusts of the Flesh play their parte for a time. This dooth *Saint Iohn* plainly teach, saying: *Whosoever is borne of God sinneth not, for his seede remaineth in him, neither can hee sinne, because hee is borne of God.* 1. Iohn 3. vers. 9. From hence it is that when the Church sleepeth, her heart waketh, that the seede of God doth remaine in her, And from hence it is, that

she cannot lose the work of sanctification, that she is born of *GOD*: who is immortal and vncchangeable. And as it is written, *Every branch that beareth fruite, he purgeth, that it may beare more fruite.* Iohn 15. *No fruitfull branch shall be cut off* Then let them go which with the papists would uphold and maintaine that wicked opinion, that the true iustifying Faith, & Sanctifying spirite, may be had and vtterly lost.

Well, thus hath the Bride in few words set forth into what estate shee was fallen, and now she setteth forth in the next place the great kindnes and loue of her spouse, who seeketh to awake, and to raise her out of this daungerous sleepe. *Hee knocketh and he calleth, it is* (sayth shee) *the voyce of my wel-beloued that knocketh.* These speeches are vsed in other places of the holie Scripture: for to the Church of the *Laodiceans*, which was neyther hote nor cold, the Lord *IESUS* sayth, *Behold I stand at the dore and knocke, if any man will heare my voyce, & wil open the dore, I will come in vnto him, and will suppe with him, and he with me.* Reuel. 3. vers. 19. 20. Also hee calleth vppon the Church of *Sardie* to awake, to strengthen the things that remaine which are

are ready to dye, *Reuelat: 3. verſe 21*

This is the ſingular kindnes of our Lord, to knock and call at the dore of our harts, to waken vs, when wee are fallen aſleepe: he will not looſe his beloved, whome hee hath bought ſo deare. This great kindnes of his, doth the Bride here ſet forth in theſe his ſpeeches: *Open vnto mee my Siſter, my Loue, my Dove, my undefiled: for my head is full of dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.* Firſt, he that is the rich treaſure of all felicitie, doth offer himſelfe to dwell in the heart: For, hee doth knocke, and ſayeth: *Open to mee*; what greater kindnes can be ſhewed? And moſt happy are they which doe open vnto him.

What is all the whole ſound of the Goſpell, but a knocking and a calling of the Lorde, to haue vs open the dores of our hearts, to let him in? And marke well, how the faithfull, even in their ſleepe, can tell that it is the voyce of *CHRIST*, when hee doth knocke and call. Hee ſaith *My ſheepe heare my voyce*, Iohn 10.

Manie ſay they canot tell which is the Trueth when they heare it, or which is the voyce and doctrine of Chriſt. For how ſhould they know, or how ſhould they
be

bee able to iudge? Doth not euery sect of false teachers boldly and constantly affirme, that theirs is the doctrine of God?

Such as doe speake thus, doe plainly confesse that they bee viterly voyde of Gods spirite, and of all grace, and that indeede they be not of his sheepe, which heare and knowe his voyce: they bee not of his Church, which euen in her sleepe doeth know his voyce. If the Faithfull (as it is heere manifest) doe heare and knowe the voice of Christ when they be asleepe, how much more when they be awake?

Then in the next place, marke what kinde words he giueth to his Church, and what honour he doth vouchsafe her: For he calleth her *his Sister, his Lone, his Dore, his undefiled*. The Lord doeth not flatter nor faine, for hee is Trueth it selfe, he hath freely layde all this dignitie and honour vpon her, and made her thus precious, and deare vnto himselfe.

In the next clause of his speech which she reporteth, hee doth perswade her to open vnto him for this cause, that hee hath vnder-gone so much for her sake, his head is wet with deaw, and his lockes with the droppes of the night. The similitude is drawne

drawne from hence, as if a Louer should goe farre in the night, and indure much inconuenience to visite his Spouse for her good. True it is, that the paines and sorowes which Christ hath vnder-gone for his Spouse, cannot be expressed.

And now marke to what end she reporteth heere his kinde and louing speeches, and the things which hee did vndergoe and indure for her sake. Surely, she doth by this deeply accuse her selfe, and aggravate her offence, euen bewayling it: For the greater his loue and kindnes is, which he doth vtter by his words, and the greater inconueniences he doth vndergoe for her sake, the more haynous is her offence, the more grieuous is her breach of dutie, which she openeth in the words that follow, when she would not open vnto him. As if she should say: Ah wretch that I am, how great is my sinne, that he being so exceeding kinde and louing vnto mee, and induring so harde things for my sake, I shewed my selfe so vnkinde, and so vndutifull vnto him? For beloued, we must needs in all reason confesse this, that the greater the loue and kindnesse of Christ is towards his Church, and the harder things
he

hee hath gone through for her sake, the more haynous is her offence in setting so light thereby, and in shewing herselfe vnkinde and vndutifull towards him.

And now marke how she shewed herselfe vnkinde and vndutifull: for she layeth open all the matter, and confesseth euenu against her selfe how it was. She was in the warme bed of securitie and carnall ease, shee is very loath for his sake to arise out of it, and therefore shee maketh these excuses, *I haue put off my coate, how shall I put it on? I haue washed my feete, how shall I defile them?*

Wee may easily vnderstand these excuses according to a litterall sense: and vnder these two are meante all the excuses which the Flesh dooth minister vnto the Faithfull, when they bee fallen into the spirituall sleepe, and are layd downe in the bed of security, to holde them from rising out of it at the calling of Christ. Oh they bee a number of excuses which the Flesh dooth minister in such cases.

Is it reason that I should so be diseased? shall I forgoe such and such pleasures and commodities? yea, shall I cast my selfe into so great inconuenience and daunger?

I thinke

thinke the Church was neuer in greater
flumber and securitie then it is now here
in this land: peace & wealth hath wrought
it. And let euery man enter into his own
conscience, and see what excuses the Flesh
doeth minister to keepe him backe, at the
daily knocking and calling of Christ to o-
pen the heart vnto him, that there may be
a sound profession of the Gospell. Is there
not a feare of this or that inconuenience,
or harme that will follow? Are we not
loathe to take any paines, or to forgoe any
vaine delights and pleasures: and is there
not great colour of reason in all our ex-
cuses? And I pray you marke well, she
doth here make excuses why shee could
not arise to let him in, but yet she did not
forsake him. He is still her wel-beloued:
For so she said, *it is the voyce of my wel-belo-
ued.* How then? why she knoweth him,
she heareth him, shee loueth him: but it is
in such a drowisie manner, as that shee will
hold the world and him together. She wil
not cast her selfe into peril nor forsake the
vaine delights of the Flesh for his sake.

Beholde how strong the remnants of
sinne be which remaine euen in the Faith-
full and deare children of God. Whither
should

should they fall, if the Lorde should let them alone? Doe they not euen refuse to open the doore of their heart vnto Christ? Is not this a maruellous vnkindnesse, and doth it not deserue sharpe punishment? Surely we must needs looke for it: if not in generall scourges, yet in particular corrections and chastisements, vpon those which doe appertaine vnto the Lord, and whom he will raise out of their sleepe.

Now let vs proceede vnto that which doth follow: *My welbeloued put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and mine heart was affectioned towards him.* The Church dealing to vnkindely, her spouse will now withdraw himselfe after a sorte from her, but yet hee will first leaue that behinde, that shall both raise her vp, to seeke after him, and support her in her afflictions.

This is his mercie, hee will not suffer her to continue in that sleepe, which shee was fallen into: he will make her to see her offence, and repent for it: yea, she shall seeke him sorrowing, and suffer great affliction, hee withdrawing himselfe after a sort, that she may take better heede to herselfe hereafter, and bee more carefull of her owne good, That she saith, *Hee put in his hand*

at the hole, and our Translation addeth, of the doore, it doth rightly indeede expresse the sense. The Similitude is taken from hence, when a dore is locked, yet there is a Key-hole, and so here: when the hearts of the faithfull be after a sorte locked vp, & Christ standeth at the dore of the heart, and calleth and knocketh, yet they do not open vnto him, but make excuses, he doeth find some little creuice or hole, as through the dore, to put in his hand.

This *Hand* is the spirit of *CHRIST*; for hee doth by his spirite touch the very inward partes of her heart. And what followeth of that inward touch of his spirit? She telleth yee, when she sayeth, *my heart was affectioned towards him*. The wordes are thus, my bowels were moued towards him. Whereby is meant, that all the inward affections and powers of her minde, are moued with repentance. Now she is grieued, and displeased with her selfe, now she lamenteth her owne follie, that she was so vndutifull: now her heart is againe rapt with the loue of him, now shee will entertaine him.

Beholde here the power of Gods Spirit, what an alteration he maketh in men, how farre

farre hee changeth them from that which they were before? Downe goeth the power of the Flesh where he commeth.

An example of it you may see in the Apostles of Christ: How weake were they and fearfull, at the time of Christes suffering? *Peter* himselfe denyeth his Maister at the voyce of a maide: but after the holy Ghost came downe vpon them, in the day of *Penthecost*, of a companie of weake and trembling Lambs, they became so manie mighty Lyons, they feared not the whole world. So is it with all the true children of the Church, they bee heauie and lumpish, and dull, when the flesh hath a stroke, and beareth some sway. Euery small thing is a let, & ministreth some excuse to keepe them backe: and the excuses seeme to be reasonable. But when the touch of the holy Spirite commeth, that Christ put in his hand at the hole of the dore, then there is a quicknes, a life and a mouing: then nothing can let, but they will seek Christ. It is then (beloued) a thing most necessarie, that we continually begge of the Lord to giue vs his spirit: for we cannot conceiue what a wonderfull chaunge and alteration he will worke in vs. Hee putterh downe
the

the flesh, and raigrieth with power. Wee remaine dull, slowe, fearefull, weake and negligent, because wee rest in our owne power very much, and do not instantly and continually craue the gifts of the spirit. But will some man say, dooth not Christ dwell always in the harts of the regenerate? And haue they not always the spirit of sanctification. How thē is it said, that Christ knocketh and calleth to haue them open vnto him, and to let him in, & they make excuses, and refuse. Or how is it that he now toucheth them with his spirite which they had before? This is easie to be answered - for we must note, that there be degrees of the measure of graces and gifts of the holy Ghost. The Apostles had the holy Ghost, and did belieue before Christs Ascention: but not in that measure afterward. So also the Lord Iesus dwelleth in all the faithfull, euen in those which haue but the least spark of the true and liuely faith: but he knocketh to haue them open the doores of their hearts wider, and to receyue him after a more full manner.

Lift vp your heads ye gates (saith the Prophet) and be ye lift vp yee everlasting doores,

R

and

and the King of glory shall come in, Psal. 24.
We must set the doores of our hearts wide
open vnto Christ, that he may dwell and
raigne in vs.

Let vs returne againe to the Spouse:
behold what a working this hath in her,
that Christ put in his hand. See what a
mouing followeth vpon her repentance:
for she stayeth not in the bare motions of
the mind (as many haue some touch, and
some motions, but they vanish) but shee
arise to open the doore vnto her wel-
beloued: It is not now grieuous vnto
her to put on her coate. O quickning
Spirite of grace, O happy touch with the
finger of Christ, what should become of
vs, what duties to our Lord God should
we performe without him? And now
marke what followeth: *My hands* (sayth
she) *did droppe downe Myrrh, and my fingers*
pure Myrrhe vpon the handles of the barre:
In these wordes shee imagineth the gra-
ces of her welbowed, Shee could touch
nothing with her hands, nor lay her fin-
gers vpon nothing where hee had put in
his hand, but all did drop, with myrrhe,
euen with pure myrrhe. For this is her
meaning, that her Welbeloued did
but

but put in his hand, and yet he had lefte
euen by his touch such abundance of
sweet graces, that wheresoeuer hee tou-
cheth, her hands droppe with the same :
What a wonderfull sweet Sauour is this ?
And how happy are they whose hearts he
doth thus touch?

When this heauenly pure Myrrhe in
such plenty is put into the heart, all the
affections are moued. The soule cannot
but bewaile her folly and vnkindnesse,
shewed to so sweet a Sauour. There can-
not but follow a loue, a zeale, and a care
to performe all duties. The Lord extend
this mercy towards vs, euen to put in his
hand at the doore of our hard and dull
hearts, to leaue there this pure myrrhe,
that the hands and fingers of our soules
may droppe therewith, that so wee may
bee moued with greater and more ear-
nest affection to seeke the Lord, then hi-
therto wee haue. If hee let vs alone, whe-
ther will our flesh carrie vs? how deepe &
dangerous will our sleepe be that we are
fallen into? The fruits of the flesh which
so grtenuously breake forth, euen in the
forwardest professors of the Gospell, doe
manifestly bewray that wee are fallen a
R 3 sleepe.

sleep. The Lord hath called, & doth continue calling, & knocking at the dores of our harts, but we are full of excuses. Some are giuen to worldly delights and pleasures. Others are set so vpon gathering & heaping vp riches, that they cannot open vnto Christ.

It followeth in the Text, *I opened vnto my welbeloued: but my welbeloued was gone and paste.* This is strange, that hee calleth and knocketh when shee was a sleepe, and lay in her bed, and now when shee is risen out of her bed, and doth open the doore to let him in, hee withdraweth himselfe and will not bee seene. Her vnkind dealing did deserue this. But doth this proceede from loue in him that hee doth withdraw himselfe. Hee hath iust cause to be displeased, and so to withdraw himselfe: but yet he doth it euen of purpose for her good, and that of a singular loue. But seeing Christ doth dwell alwayes in the faithfull, how cannot it be sayde, that he doth withdraw himselfe out of their sight, especially when hee hath made their hands to droppe with myrrh. This is out of doubt, that the Lord is sometimes present in the soules of the
faith-

faithfull, and yet to their thinking he seemeth to be absent. He doth support them and yet they haue not that liuely and comfortable feeling of his presence, which they wish, and which sometimes they had. Then the heart is troubled, then they mourne, then they seeke and call after him: for shee sayeth: *Mine heart was gone when he did speake, I sought him, but I could not finde him, I called him, but he answered me not.*

Alas now she is afraid, that her vnkind dealing should cause him to forsake her: Now she openeth the doores of her heart to let him in; she seeketh him, and calleth after him, but he will not be found. Who is able to expresse the griefe and sorrowe that the godly soule hath, when there is a deepe remorse for sinne, and shee seeketh to feelee the consolation of Christ, and he hideth himselfe from her. True it is, that the soule could not repent, shee could not open the doore to receiue him in: shee could not so earnestly seeke and call after him, vnlesse that he were present, and did worke these things in her: For all these things proceede from his grace: but yet hee doth seeme to bee absent.

Let not this seem straunge, when as the glorious Godhead, vnited to the manhood in *CHRIST*, was not separated from the same, when hee did hang vpon the crosse, but did as it were retayne, or not shewe forth the power, that the same *Manhood* might suffer the punishmēt that is due to siane, and so make satisfaction, and yet he cryed out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken mee?* Shall not we then take it in some sort that he forsaketh vs, euē when he yet is present? But yet here againe will be demaunded, how that which is spoken in this place, agreeth with the promise which is made, *Seeke and finde, &c.* seeing here is no mention for all vehement calling after him, that she doth finde him: yea, still she goeth on, and it is not saide that she found him. I answer, that here is indeed a most vehement seeking, & nothing said that she found him, but yet in the beginning of the next chapter, shee sayeth, *Hee was gone downe into his Garden.* Then shee percey- ueth at the last that hee is present with her, and there indeede shee gloryeth of him. How commeth this to passe? Surely, he entreth in when the dore is opened, though she do not perceiue it.

This

This is the Doctrine which I gather, which I would make plaine vnto you: that when the Faithfull Soule is moued with earnest repentance, and doth seeke and crye after the Lord Iesus Christ, and seemeth not to finde him, yet shee doeth finde him.

Christ dooth not enter in so fully and at once, that shee dooth perceyue it, and yet in the end, she findeth that he is come to his garden. She findeth that her rising out of her sleepe, and from her Bed, her opening the doore, seeking and calling after him, were not in vaine. This (beloued) ought greatly to encourage vs, that when we seeke and cannot perceyue that we finde, not to giue over: For doubtles in the end we shall well perceyue that our seeking, and our sorrowing after him, hath bin to good purpose.

Many seeke, and because they find not euen according to their desire at the first, they saynt and giue over: but we must remember that Christ is very precious, and if with long and great seeking, we finde that we haue gotten euen some little holde for to retain him with vs, it is much. To gaine but a little in Heauenly things, euen with

very great labour and trauell is much.

And now to the last verse which I did reade, *The Watch-men that went about the Cittie found mee, they smote me, and wounded mee: the Watch-men of the walles tooke away my vaile from me.*

Here now shee reporteth what grieuous calamitie and affliction came vppon her. *The Watch-men found her,* and what doe they? Her wordes are plaine, that *they smote her, and wounded her, and tooke away her vaile.* For vnder these speeches she setteth forth a very great affliction that light vpon her, as it shal appeare, if we do marke the circumstances well in all things.

First, her conscience accuseth her how vnkindely shee hath dealt towards Christ, who hath withdrawne himselfe worthily for the same. Then next, her protector hiding away himselfe. What a feare is it vnto a tender Virgin in the Night, to fall into the handes of rough and churlish fellows? yea, when they be highly displeased with her as it appeareth they are: For they beate her, and that grieuously, for they doe wound her.

Oh what a cruelty is this, what sauage men are these? Yea, marke further who they be.

They

They be the Watchmen, euen they that of all others should chiefly defende and comfort her : For, the watch-men are the shepheards, the pastors and teachers.

The Prophets of God doe complaine of the wicked priests in the time of the Law, how they did afflict the godly. And how great are the calamities which the sincere professors of the Gospell haue suffered a long time, I may say many hundred yeers, at the hands of the proud Romish prelates? what is the cause that they be so displeased? Surely, because shee seeketh after Christ.

They will beare with any disorder sauing that. They be proud, they be popous, they be delicate, they be blinde, euen like to the blinde Pharises. If any ryot or excesse be committed, these Watchmen be good fellows : but if they seeke Christ, that is intollerable, that is to their disgrace, vpon such they fall, they beate & wound them.

And as the mother of all heere complayneth, they take away her vaile. For virgins to haue a vayle, it was for modestie and chastitie, and so it was an honour. They doe deface and dishonour her all that they can : for they will make as though shee were an Harlot.

• They

They tearme them that seeke Christ
Heretikes, Schismatikes, and fantasti-
call. They lay all the most vile reproa-
ches vpon them which they can deuise.
Let it not then trouble vs when it com-
meth to passe, that those which haue the
office and place to teach the Church, doe
beate and wound and disgrace her.

Did not the Builders refuse
Christ himselfe the head
corner stone? What
maruel thē, though
they beate his
seruāts? thus
much for
this time.

THE



The tenth Sermon.

CHAP. V.

7 I charge you O daughters of Ierusalem,
if you finde my Welbeloued, that you tell him
that I am sicke of loue.

8 O sayrest among women, what is thy wel-
beloued more then another welbeloued, what
is thy Welbeloued more the another lover that
thou doest so charge vs?

9 My welbeloued is white and ruddie,
the chiefest of ten thousand.

10 His head is as fine gold, his lockes cur-
led, and blacke as a rauen.

11 His eyes are like doves vpon the rivers
of waters, which are washt with milke, and re-
maine by the full vessels.

12 His cheekes are as a bed of spices, and
as sweete flowers, and his lippes like lillies drop-
ping downe pure myrrhe.

13 His hands like rings of golde, set with
the Chrysolite: his belly like white, Iuorie,
couered

covered with Saphires.

14 His legges are as of pillars of Marble, set upon sockets of fine golde, his countenance as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.

15 His mouth is as sweet things, and he is wholly delectable, this is my welbeloued, this is my Loner, O daughters of Ierusalem.

16 O the fayrest among women, whether is thy welbeloued gone, whether is thy welbeloued turned aside, that we may seeke him with thee.

17 My welbeloued is gone downe into his garden, to the beds of spices, that he may seele in the gardens, and gather the Lillies.



IN the former parte of this Chapter, we haue seen how the Bridegroom knocking & calling to raise his Spouse out of her sleepe, euen from her carnall security, what excuses she made, how vnkindly, and vndutifully she dealeth with him. Moreouer we haue seene, how he for the same vnkindnes did hide himselfe from her, shee seeketh after him, & falleth into the hands of the Watchmen, euen

euē into the hands of proud Prelates,
and false Pastors, which dealt very cru-
elly with her, they did not kill her, for
God will not suffer his Church to be roo-
ted out.

Nay, you shall see, that they did not
with all their rough tyranny so much as
once daunt or discourage her from see-
king after Christ. They beate her, they
wounded her, and tooke away her vaile;
doth she now shrink for feare, or dooth
shee hide her head, and giue ouer seeking?
No verily, shee goeth on in her search, &
is more vehement then before: when the
flesh had preuayled to cast her into a sleepe
those seemed great and waighty reasons
to withhold her: *I haue put off my coat,*
and I haue washed my feete For how (say-
eth shee) *shall I put it on, and how shall I*
foule them?

Christ seemeth to require that at her
hands which was without all reason, but
after he had touched her inwardly with
his spirite, she sayth not, I haue sought
him, & by seeking haue bin beatē, woun-
ded and disgraced, how shall I seeke him
any longer? There is now a fire kindled
in her which none can quench, the flesh
now

with all the excuses which it can make, is put downe.

The faithfull doe neuer loue Christ, nor seeke after him with more burning zeale then in time of hote persecution. All experience hath taught this from time to time. And the practise of the Spouse doth here fully shew it. It was to this end & purpose that he put in his hand at the hole of th dore, and left that sweet Myrrhe with which her fingers did droppe. The truth is, that in those times of calamity, the Lord seemeth to hide himselfe away, and to be displeased for the sinnes of his people, yea euen to bee farre from them: but yet by that inward touch, by putting in his hand he is very neere vnto them: he doth support and comfort them most mightily.

Let vs therefore come to her Words, out of which these things are to bee gathered, *I charge you O daughters of Ierusalem &c.* She doth heere lay a straight charge againe vpon her companions: for her words are, I binde you with an oath, or I doe cause you to sweare. This sheweth great vehemency, as it shall also appeare by their answer. Now for the matter of her

her charge, thus it standeth, *If you finde my welbeloned, what will you tell him that I am sicke of loue?* The manner of her speech, that shee sayeth, *What will you tell him?* And then addeth, *That I am sicke of loue,* doth shew a most vehemēt passion. For indeed the wordes are not vttered to say, *If you finde my beloued,* tel him, but what will you tell him? This demaunding the question, sheweth that her loue did so appeare, that they must needs if they wil tell him any thing, tell him that she is sicke of loue.

This is exceeding great loue, that shee commeth to be loue sicke. If the flesh had borne sway, that would haue reasoned after another sort, as thus: I opened the dore, and he withdrew himselfe, and by that occasion I haue suffered great calamity, therefore I haue small cause to loue him, seeing hee doth hide himselfe from me, and cause me to be thus struckē and wounded, why should I set my heart vpon him? The flesh I say, would minister such kind of reason, but the faithfull are not ledde by the wisdom of the flesh, but by the heauenly spirite which teacheth them the more they suffer for Christ,
the

the more to loue him. This is a thing passing all humane reason, that the Bride hauing fallen into so great affliction by seeking after her Bridegroom, is thereupon sicke of loue.

The faithfull indeed reioyce in afflictions, it is an honour vnto them to suffer for Christ, and the more they suffer for his sake, he doth so strengthen them, and so worke in them, that the more they loue him. There is more zeale and more earnest praier to God among the faithfull, in the times of affliction and persecution, then in the time of prosperity and worldly peace: for then commonly men doe growe secure.

Thus hauing heard what the Spouse sayth to the daughters of *Ierusalem*, Let vs now see what answer they do make: *O thou fayrest among women what is thy Welbeloued more then another welbeloued, what is thy welbeloued more then another louer, that thou doest so charge vs?* First of all wee may obserue here, that these daughters of *Ierusalem* doe behold and acknowledge a great beauty in the Spouse, that they call her the fayrest among women. Such as be goodly to behold, if they fall into affliction,

tion, that maketh them to seeme base and contemptible. The Church then being beaten and wounded by the Watchmen, and her vaile taken from her, beeing (I say) thus dishonoured and disgraced : what beautie could they behold in her?

Afflictions do make base and contemptible to the outward shew : but the beautie of the Church is not outwards, in the thinges of this life, but in spirituall ornaments, which are not diminished or dimmed by afflictions, but do the in deed shine brightest of all. For, in the times of the greatest persecutions, when the godly are imprisoned, racked, and tormented, you shall behold their stedfast Faith, their fervent zeale, their patience, their contempt of this world, with many other vertues : for which the daughters of Ierusalem, euen the weaker sorte, which are not as yet fully come to Christ, doe commend the Spouse to bee the fayrest amongst Women.

Doubtles, the very Tyrants and persecutors themselves, are sometimes constrained to wonder at the glorie of the Faith, and patience of the Martyrs.

Then in the next place, wee may note,

S

how

how these daughters of Ierusalem, doe as it were wonder why she is so earnest in seeking her well beloued, that shee dooth so charge them with an Oathe, to tell them that she is sicke of loue : and herevpon they enquire and aske her what there is in him more then in another well-beloued : For, if there bee not an excellencie in him aboute all others, why should she be so vehement in seeking him ?

We do account it a vanitie to be vehement in seeking that which is little worth. Heere is a very speciall thing to be obserued : and that is, that the earnest seeking of the Faithfull after Christ, is a meane to styrre vp others to enquire what hee is, or what there is in him,

Reason doth leade men thus farre, when they see that no threatnings, no bonds, no tortures, nor sufferings can preuaile, but that the Faithfull do become more earnest in seeking Christ, to say within themselues out of all doubt there is some great thing that carryeth these men : it is no small benefite for which they will endure all these things. Heerevpon they begin to enquire what Christ is : *What is thy well-beloued* (say they) *more then another wel-beloued, Oh thou say.*

fairest among women : What is thy wel-beloved, more then another Lover, that thou doest so charge us?

Heere is one great step towards Eternall life, when men doo begin to enquire after the Lorde Iesus Christ, and are desirous to knowe what his benefits and graces be. Where we may note, what a good thing it is to be zealous and earnest in the profession of the Gospell, and in seeking the Lorde Iesus Christ. Oh it winneth soules : for it causeth such as had little regard, to enter into the consideration what *CHRIST* is, when they see others so earnestly bent, and cannot be driven back by no meanes from seeking after him. And when there is a coldnes, especially in the ministers of the Gospell, so that they seeke more earnestly after the things of this life, then they doe, to set vp the Kingdome of God : Dooth it not as it were beate into the heads of the ignorant and simpler sort, that the Gospell is a thing of no very great price? For, if it were worth the while, if it should bring such felicitie, would not the Teachers themselues set more by it, then by the transitory things of this life?

What is this but to lay stumbling blocks

before the lame, and to cause the blinde to goe out of theyr way, which thing God doth accurse in the Law? Woe be vnto them therefore, who ought to be most zealous of all others in forsaking this worlde, and seeking after Christ, that by their zeale they might styrre vp such as know not the Lord, to enquire what the matter is about which they be so vehement: and they be so cold that way, and so studious for this world, that they driue them backe,

Beloued, know this also, that whoso eue he be, though meane in the world, that in simplicitie and singlenes of heart, with earnest zeale ioyned with meeknesse doth seeke the Lord, hee shall be a meanes, yea, euen an happie instrument, to winne others.

Let vs proceede: The Daughters of Ierusalem demaund, *What is thy Wel-beloued; more then an other Well-beloued?* And herevpon shee describeth him vnto them.

First, before wee enter into the examination of the particulars, wee may consider in generall, how that shee setteth foorth here the Riches, the Dignitie, the Glorie, and Beautie of Christ.

This

This is the office of the Church to publish Christ crucified. And now most willingly she dooth it, when the daughters of Ierusalem are so inquisitiue for to knowe him.

Shee describeth him at large, to the end that it may appeare there is good cause to moue her so earnestly to seeke him, and that it may be knowne what a rich Jewell they obtaine that doe finde him. Moreover, doe you not see here that it is not persecution that can stoppe the mouth of the Church, or make her keepe silence, but she will publish and lay open the glorie, and the praise of her *Well-beloued*.

Oh how the cruell enemyes do storme, how they gnash their Teeth, how they fret and rage? when the sincere and holy doctrine of Christ, is published, which doeth lay open the rich treasures of his grace, that in him there is all fullnes of good things, to make men happie: and yet for their furie, the faithfull seruants of the Lord will not be silent, but describe him and paynte him forth. True it is, when Christ is earnestly sought, and when his graces are thoroughly layde open, it doeth displease prowde Heretikes, which stand to main-

taine their owne doctrine and wicked errors. Also the glosing hypocrites which boast of their owne merites, and glory in themselves cannot abide it. Yea such as haue made their belly their god, that mind Earthly things are angry, because it is a great rebuke vnto them, that Christ being so excellent, they preferre the world before him. They would faine seeme good being altogether worldly: and when it is made manifest that they make a blinde and a wicked choyce in setting much by the world, and so little by Christ, it doth disgrace them. But how soeuer they doe take it, the holy Church describeth Christ. And in the first place shee speaketh of his colour and complection, saying, *My wel-beloued is white and ruddy.* These two colours together doe shew a right excellent constitution of body, and also a very perfect beauty.

The Lord is goodly and glorious, hee is strong, and shall remaine for euer in perfect health. Yea he is so excellent, that she sayth, *He is the chiefe of ten thousand.* Or as the very words are, *He is the Standard bearer of ten thousand.* He doth indeed very far excell all creatures whatsoeuer, euen
men

men and Angels: and therefore she sayeth, *Hee is euen as the Standard bearer of ten thousand.*

Then comming to the seuerall partes shee sayeth, *That his head is as fine golde:* Two names of gold indeed are here vsed: the first of them signifying fine golde: the other, gold that is purified. Hereby shee setteth forth how excellent, how glorious, how rich and shining the heade of Christ is. For among earthly thinges, what is comparable to the fine gold? If there be a purpose to signifie somewhat by euery part of the body, then by the head of Christ we may vnderstand the Deity, *I would haue you to know* (sayth S. Paul) *that Christ is the head of euery man, that the man is the head of the woman, and that God is the head of Christ, 1. Cor. 11. v. 3.* But I doe not hold it necessary to entprrete euery part, as signifying somewhat, but onely this, that the Spouse describing Christ, maketh her description according to the parts of the naturall body of man, to the end, that it may be knowne that he is wholly, and altogether beautifull, delectable and precious. It was accounted beautifull in a young man to haue

blacke haire; and therefore she sayeth, *His locks are curled and blacke as a Raven.*

But what, shall we take it, that here is any allowance of that Ruffian-like wearing of long hayre, which is vsed in these dayes? No verily: For the *Nazarites*, which according to the lawe of God did weare long haire, did weare it after a most graue and sober manner.

In the next place shee doeth praise his Eyes, saying: *His Eyes are as Doves vppon the riuers of waters*; Or thus more plainly, *His Eyes are as the eyes of Doves, which are beside the riuers of waters.*

The eyes of the Doue (as it hath bin said before) is a beautyfull eye, chaste and single. To the Doves therefore she likeneth the eyes of her Spouse. And to set out a further clearenesse and beautie in them: Here is mention of those doves, which are by the riues of cleare waters, as the doves doe delight.

Then further she sayeth, *They be washed with milke*: (this is for a further brightnes) and remaine (as our Translation saith) *by the full vessels*. There is no speech of vessels in the Hebr: text: but thus the words do stand *they remaine vpon the fulner*. And herewe must

must know that the word which he vseth, which may be called *Fulnes*, signifieth the hollow place in which a precious stone is set, for the precious stones set vpon rings, or in rowes vpon the Ephod, had their hollow places in which they were cunningly set, and so were called stones of fulnes, because they did in so fit sort fill their hollow places. Vnto this shee likeneth the eyes of her Spoule, saying: *That they remaine vpon the fulnes*: that is, they doo like precious stones that are set most cunningly fill their hollow places.

This is a speciall commendation of the Eyes in man or woman. For, if the Eyes do stand forth too much, it is a deformitie, as if we vse to say, goggle-eyed, and likewise if they be sunke in so deepe, that they be then, as we vse to terme them, hollow eyed. The Bride-groome is neyther of these: his pure Eyes are as precious stones that are fitly set in their places. It followeth: *His cheekes are like a bed of Spices, and as sweete Flowers.*

Touching the latter clause, the word is translated *Flowers*, doth vsually signifie towers: but it hath bin taken here for flowers that grow vp in the beds of spices. If we should

should expound the words then after the vsuall signification, wee should say as the Towers of those which make sweet ointments, but wee may more fitly take them to be the growne plants of those that deale with spices and sweete ointments, seeing the proper signification of the Word, is of greatnesse.

His lippes are like Lillies, dropping down pure Myrrhe. The Lillies are faire and sweet of themselves, vnto those shee compareth his lippes, adding moreouer, that they droppe pure Myrrhe. This is to bee referred vnto that holy and heauenly word, which proceedeth out of his mouth In the commendation of his Church, Christ sayde, that *her lips did droppe as the honey combe*, and now shee sayeth, That *his lippes doe droppe pure Myrrhe*. It is the same word which proceedeth from the mouth of either of them, but not after the same manner: for it hath proceeded from him as from the author thereof, it is his owne, it hath the high and soueraigne authority from him. The Church doth vtter it not as her own, but as hauing receiued it from him. True it is, that his lippes do drop pure myrrhe onely to his spouse:
for

for the reprobate do cause by their obstinacy, that this word *which commeth out of his mouth, is vnto them as a sharpe sword, by which they are slaine: yea it is a fire that doth burue them vp, it dooth vex and torment them.* Reu. 11. Looke therefore vnto thy selfe, if the Word of the Lord bee sweete and precious vnto thee, euen as the pure myrrhe: if thou take thy ioy and solace in it, as the Prophet reporteth of himselfe, in Psal. 119. then art thou a childe of the Church. The light and power of the heavenly word dooth dwell in thee, and thou doest obey it. But if it be bitter vnto thee, because it discloseth the foule wickednesse of thy hart, if it torment thee, that thou canst not abide to heare it, but as it is written, Thou sayest to the Prophets: *Prophecie vnto vs pleasant things:* then wofull is thine estate, for thou louest darknesse more then light, because thy workes be euill. It is a necessary thing that euery one looke well into this matter.

The next is, that she sayeth, *His hands are like rings of gold, set with Chrysolite.* It may bee thus taken, that vpon hands are rings of gold, set with Chrysolite. The matter hath beene, and is to weare ringes
of

of golde, which are set with goodly precious stones. The difference is not great, whether way wee take it : eyther that his *Hands* are like those rings of golde, or that they be so adorned with them. This is the sense that all is rich and shining. The like sense there is in the next words : *His Belly is like white luyry, covered with Saphyrs* : for these things are both beautifull and precious.

It followeth, *His Legges are as pillars of Marble set vpon sockets of fine golde, his countenance as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars*. Heere is a fit representation of his legs, by pillars of marble, and set vpon sockets of fine golde, and of his stature, that hee is to looke vpon, as the Cedars of Lebanon. For I do take it manifest, that the countenance is to bee referred to his whole stature. For, it is as it should be said, looke vpon him, and he is of stature goodly & tall, euen like vnto the high Cedars of Lebanon. His mouth is as sweete things, and he is wholly delectable.

Very well wee may take the wordes thus : The roose of his mouth is moste sweete. As if we should say, there cometh nothing out of his mouth, but that which

which is sweete. Yea, shee will not stand to prosecute euery parte, but addeth a generall commendation: That hee is wholly delectable, or most to be desired. From toppe to toe, hee is glorious and excellent. Wherefore hauing thus described him, shee concludeth with an exclamation. *This is my welbeloued, and this is my Louer, Oh daughters of Ierusalem.*

Hauing such a Louer as this whome she hath described: Hath she not good cause to seeke after him: yea, euen to be sicke of loue for him?

This glorie, these Riches, this sweetnes of *CHRIST* is hidden from the world, and this is the reason why men doe not long after him. Most admirable it is, that such treasures of Eternall life and happines are propounded in the Gospell, and the same so lightly esteemed. But doubtlesse men cannot esteeme that they see not.

The god of this World (sayth Saint Paul) *hath blinded the mindes of the infidels, least the light of the Gospell of the glory of Christ, should shine vnto them, who is the image of God.* 2. Corinth: 4. vers. 4.

The Gospell dooth shine most cleare and bright, the Church as wee see heere,
pub.

publisheth, and painteth out Christ Iesus to bee most precious: but the Diuell is so greata Lord in the world, hee hath such power, he beareth such sway, and worketh with such efficacie in the heartes of men, that very few doe behold the light, very fewe are brought thus farre, as to embrace the sauing health of the Lord.

Oh, how wretched is the state of mankinde, that such a *Redeemer* beeing published, cannot be brought to embrace him. But the Spouse doth well, she goeth on in performing her office: she doth not onely seeke after him, euen sicke with Loue, and will not with any cruelty be dismayed, but also publisheth and proclaimeth openly, what manner of one he is: she describeth his Riches and his glorie, euen to this ende, that such as doo not yet know him, may be moued to seeke him, and to enjoy his benefites.

Now, whereas shee hath thus described her wel-beloued: let vs see what effect it worketh, For this appeareth by the next wordes, which bee these: *Whither is thy Well beloued gone, Oh thou sayrest among women? Whither is thy welbeloued turned aside, that wee may seeke him with thee?*

The

The Daughters of Ierusalem hearing that hee is so goodly a person, are Ityrred vppe, and enflamed with a desire to seeke him : This is the effect which her speech in commendation of Christ wrought.

And this is a singular effect, and such as indeed is to be reckoned among the chiefe actions vnder heauen that are wrought by men. For if we do regard it first, in respect of the Lord, what a worthy thing is it to spread the glory of *CHRIST*? And then if wee respect men, what a worke of charitie is it to drawe men into the way of Salvation? Here may the ministers of the Gospell learne what their chiefe durie is : for that which dooth draw men chiefly to loue, and to seeke after Christ, that is their chiefe worke : there are they to employ all their chiefe force. And you may see here that it is the describing of Christ, even the opening and displaying of the rich Treasures & graces which be in him that draweth men to seeke him. Who will seeke that which hee knoweth not? And who will not seeke after a precious jewell?

Beholde therefore, how the holy Apostles, euen *Paul* and the rest, doo paynte out Christ crucified? They doo lay open

in him that we shall finde a remedie for all our miseries. Then are all true pastors and teachers to bee plenteous in publishing, and mainifesting the graces and Heauenly blessings that be in the Lord Iesus. For so shall they drawe men effectually to long after him, and to seeke him.

Here is a description made by the Spouse, as wee haue seene, but all vnder an Allegorie, for that is according to the whole course of this Song.

Let the ministers of God lay open all things as plainly as may be : for that shall comfort the harts of the simple. Let them declare how *that hee is made vnto vs of God, Wisdome, Righteousnes, Sanctification, and Redemption.* 1. Cor: 1. *Let them open how he was made the curse of the Law,* Galat: 3. *Yea, how hee made him sinne for vs, that knew no sinne, that wee in him might bee made the Righteousnes of God.* 2. Cor. 5.

For these things being laid open, men will couet with the Apostle, Philip. 3. to be found in him, euen as we see how these daughters of Ierusalem do now earnestly enquire whether he is gone, that they may seeke him. And marke well, how they say not simplie seeke him : but, that wee may

may seeke him, with thee. This is the right way to seeke him indeede, this is the onely way to finde him, when anie doe seeke Christ with the Church.

You haue many heretikes, and schismatikes, which hauing come to some knowledge of Christ, growe into a pride and disdayne to seeke him with the Church, scatter, and will needs seeke him by themselves. But here is their reward, they finde the diuell, they finde no Christ. Let vs learn here to enquire for him of the spouse and to seeke him with her, for so it is said, That we may seeke him with thee.

And see now what followeth: For the Church maketh answer, and telleth them where they shall seeke him. Her words are the beginning of the next chapter. but more rightly they are to be added to this chapter. And thus they be: *My well-beloued is gone downe into his Garden, to the beds of spices, that he may feed in the Gardens, and gather the Lyllys. I am my welbeloueds, & my wel beloued is mine, who feedeth among the Lyllys.* Here we may obserue diuers points, as first that shee telleth them Christ is in his garden among the sweet Spices & delectable straws, that is to say, he is in his
T church.

Church. If they wil find him, there he is to be found, & not any were else: secondly, it is apparant, that althogh Christ do after a sorte withdrawe himselfe, so that the Church in great affliction doth seeke him sorrowing, yet shee knoweth that he is with her. The Faithfull do feeble Christ present, but they doe not feeble him in that measure which they do wish. If it were not so, how could the Spouse so crye out after him in seeking, and yet tell them that hee is in the garden?

Here is the consolation of the Faithfull, that howsoever the Lord dooth seme to withdraw and hide himself away from them for a time, yet they be sure hee cannot forsake his Church, and they shall find him. And for this cause, yee see how she gloryeth in the next words, of that communion that is betweene her and Christ:

I am (sayeth she) *my welbeloueds, and he is mine*, that feedeth among the Lyllyes. If shee be his, if shee wholly deuote herselfe to liue vnto him, and to set forth his glory: (for the Faithful are so to be Consecrated vnto him in soule and body, as to liue vnto him) and on the other side, if hee with all his riches and glorie be hers, as with a

surance

urance of Faith she doth glorie, then how can it be but she shall finde him? Yea, she hath found him, for the Lord dooth enter in, to all that open vnto him: albeit in their calamityes hee seemeth to haue hidden himselfe.

Oh, what a treasure hath that Soule, which with a true and liuely Faith can say, I am the Lords, and the Lord is mine, he feedeth among the Lylles, he wil feede me with all swete things.

Let vs make it our whole study to come to this: For, hee that hath **CHRIST**, hath all.

The eleventh Sermon.

CHAP. VI.

1. Thou art fayre my Loue, as Tirzah, exactly as Ierusalem, terrible as an Army with Banners.

2. Turne away thine eyes from me, for they ouer-come mee: thine haire is like a flocke of Goates, which looke downe from Gilead.

3. Thy teeth are like a flocke of sheep, which go up from the washing, which euery one bring

one twinnes, and none is barren among them.

4. Thy temples are within thy lockes, as a piece of a Pomegranate.

5. There are three-score Queenes, and foure-score Concubines, and of the Damselfs without number.

6. But my Dowe is alone, and my undefiled, shee is the onely daughter of her Mother, & she is deare to her that bare her: the daughters haue seene her, and counted her blessed, euen the Queenes and the concubines, and they haue praised her.

6. Why is shee that looketh forth as the Morning; faire as the Moone, pure as the Sunne, terrible as an Army with Banners?

8. I went downe to the garden of Nutter, to see the fruits of the valley, to see if the Vine budded, and if the Pomegranates flourished.

9. I knew nothing, my soule set mee as the chariots of my Noble people.

10. Returne, returne, Oh Shulamite: returne, returne, that wee may beholde thee. What shall you see in the Shulamite, but as the companie of an Army?



IN this Chapter, and also in the next, the Lord *I E S U S* doeth giue very great & singular commendations vnto his deere Spouse, testifying his loue and hartly affection towards

her. Having praised her greatly in the fourth Chapter, it may bee demaunded, why he doth it againe after the same manner, and in diuers things with the same words? Indeed this may be demaunded, least wee might imagine that here were a tedious, and a needlesse repetition.

The truth is, that this commendation is not superfluous, but cometh very fitly for the consolation of the Spouse. For you haue scene in the beginning of the former Chapter, what a fault she committed, how vnkindely she dealt with Christ, how he (as displeased) withdrew himselfe, so that she fell into great affliction. She hath bewayled her offence, she hath sought after her sorrowing: And now least it might seeme that she had by her sinne, lost that her former beaurie and commendations, yea, least there might seeme to remaine

some blot, or that his former liking were diminished, hee doth giue her the same, or rather greater commendation the before. This in general is the cause why the Lord doth againe commend his Church.

And here we beholde the great kindness of the Lord Iesus Christ, who doth quite forget all offences committed against him, as if they had neuer bin. He doeth not so much as once vpbraide his Spouse with her vnkinde dealing, doubtesse the faithfull hauing felt and tasted how sweet the Lord is, being made partakers of his great benefites, when they bee ouertaken with the Flesh, and doo fall into vndutyfulnes towards Christ, are much dismayed, fearing that now they cannot bee beautifull and deare in his sight. Now they haue deformed themselues, how should he forsake them? Heere is therefore a speciall comfort ministred, that they hauing lamented and bewayled their offences, seeking after him with an earnest desire, traouelling and heauy loaden, hee dooth refresh them, hee doth embrace them, hee doth loue them, hee doth commend them, and delight in them, euen as if they had neuer dealt euill towards him.

What

What a sweete Lorde is this? What a gracious Redeemer haue wee? Can any tongue expresse the riches of his Grace? Or, who is able any way to set forth the bountifullnes of this Lord? This ought not to encourage vs to do euill, that hee quite forgetteth all our offence, as if they had neuer bin done: when wee repent, and turne vnto him bewayling our transgressions, and thirsting for his grace: For, shall his kindnes increase our vnkindnes?

Shall his Loue cause vs to hate him? Shall his well-doings towardes vs bee an occasion that we should dishonour him? For what else doe all they that are emboldned to sinne, but dishonor him, hate him, and shewe vnkindenesse vnto him? Nay, his exceeding loue and kindnes must worke another effect in vs, and that is, to loue him with a vehement loue: For, doth not loue require loue againe: and is not kindnes to be rendred vnto kindnes?

Take holde of this beloved, let it not depart away from you, the Lord is kinde and mercifull, hee is bounteous and long-suffering, hee doth receyue poore sinners that repent: therefore let vs with our whole hart loue him, let vs honour & obey him.

Let it not come neare vs, that his goodnes should make vs nought: I speake it, because there bee many, who when they heare that Christ is so ready to forgite, do euen boldly commit a manner of wickednes: for they hope of pardon. This is a most vile thing, a thing abhominable, for they do abuse the graces of God, to their greater condēnation, for the holy Apostle vrging & requiring that men which professe Christ, should adorn the doctrine of God our Sauiour, by their godly deedes, addeth this golden sentence: saying, *For the grace of god hath appeared, which bringeth saluation vnto all men, teaching vs, that denying vngodlinesse and worldly lusts, wee should live soberly and iustly, and godly in this present world: Tit. 2. verse 11. 12.* If the grace of God hath appeared to this ende, how farre bee they out of the right way, which take occasion theteby to continue in sinne? but let vs omit these, and come to the words of our text.

Thou art faire my loue as Tirza, comely as Ierusalem, terrible as an army with banners. These were two goodly Cities, Tirza, and Ierusalem, and vnto these for beauty and comelines, the Bride grome doth

com-

compare his loue. And in the next clause he commendeth her terrible fortitude in battell. In the first Chapter he doth liken her to a troupe of horses in the Chariots of Pharaoh. She is strong and prompt to the battaile. And here commending her for the same thing, he saith, *that she is terrible as an army with banners.* But vnto whome is her fortitude and valure thus terrible? Surely, euen vnto all her foes, but especially vnto the infernall powers, for hauing put on the whole armor of God, she standeth in the spirituall battaile, she resisteth and putteth diuels to flight. Thus we see, why he saith she is terrible as an army with banners: an army that is strong and marcheth with banners or ensignes, is very terrible to their aduersaries to behold: euen so is the spouse vnto the whole armies of diuels; But here we must obserue, that the faithfull soule hath not this force of her selfe but is strong and terrible in the mighty power of God. And Saint Paul teacheth that *we stand in that inuincible power of his, by putting on the whole armor of God.* Ephes. 6. The Church of Rome hath turned all this into an outward shew, yea euen into a ridiculous

moc-

mockery. For whereas the true Church militant goeth thus armed to the battaile, and is indeede, through the mighty power of God, terrible euen as an army with banners: they take away the word of God, and so depriue them of all the whole armor of God, and instead thereof, goe marching in procession with great high banners vpon poles, as if the diuell were to be fought against, or feared with such a shew.

Then it is added in the text: *Turne away thine eyes from me, for they overcome me.* In the fourth Chapter hee vsed another speech, but to the same effect: for whō he said, that she pluckt away his heart, with one of her eyes, or that she had with the beauty, simplicity and chastity of her eyes euen wonne his heart, it expresseth a most vehement affection of loue towards her. Euen so in this place the beauty of her eyes doeth affect him in maruelous manner. The sence is very plaine, but the Phrase of speecch is not so plaine: and therefore taken diuers wayes. For some do take it that he doth not say, *turne away thine eyes from me: but turne thine eyes towards me.* For Christ doth not meane
that

that the Church should turne the eyes of
her faith from him. And then the other
chaufe they doe expound thus, that they
may lift me vp, that is, with consolation.
This doeth highly commend the glorious
beauty of faith and most true it is, as
Christ said before: *My Dove that dwellest
in the cleft of the rocke in my hollow place of the
floures, shew me thy face, make mee to heare
thy voyce, &c.* So heare it is not his mea-
ning, but that shee should turne her eyes
towards him, and not turne them away
from him: but yet surely (as I take it) the
words are to be translated thus, *Turne thine
eyes from me, for they overcome me.* It is a
kind of speech that doth in the highest sort
that can be, expresse how much the beau-
ty of her eyes doth delight him. For euen
as she said she was sicke of loue, so he saith
that he is, as it were overcome with loue.
Doubtlesse there is not any way to ex-
presse a greater liking. Is the beauty then
and the glory of faith (for that is the eye,
or rather the eyes of the soule) so excel-
lent in the eyes of the Lord, and shall not
we labour to obtaine so precious a gift?
O beloued, the more stedfastly wee trust
in the Lord: the more acceptable it is vn-

to him, the more wee doe glorifie him, Did he not euen wonder at the faith of the Cananitish woman, saying: *O woman great is thy faith, be it unto thee euen as thou desirest?* Math. 15. And also Iesus marvelled at the faith of the Centurion, Luk. 7. Let vs not harken to the blasphemous voyce of the Papists, which affirme that it is arrogancy and wicked presumption for men to assure themselves of the fauour of Christ: and that it is humility to be alwayes in doubt. Indeepe because their faith is reposed in their owne works and merites, they may right well stand in doubt: but all that rest in the promises of G O D, euen in his free mercy in Christ, what cause is there that they should doubt? Is God vntrue of his promise? Yea all they which will not belieue but doubt, doe make God a lyar, 1. Iohn 5. which is blasphemous.

It followeth: *Thine haire is like a flocke of Goates, which looke downe to Mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheepe, which go up from the washing, which euery one bring out twinnes, and none is barren among them. Thy temples are within thy locks as a peece of a Pomegranate. I ioyne all these*
together

together; because we had them before in Chap. 4. and in the very same words, only one word excepted, and that is, that he likeneth her teeth heere, as the word is in this place, to a flock of ewes: and in chap. 4. he calleth them a flocke of equall bignesse, or as it were cut of equall stature and proportion. I neede not stand heere againe in exposition, but only thus much the Lord will haue his Church to know, that vpon her repentance, her fault is forgottē, he doth not, nor wil not so much as once vpbraide her therewith. This kindnes of our Lord ought we to imitate, which is no easie thing vnto flesh and bloud. For let a man shew vnkindnesse and doe iniury vnto men, they will not forget it very readily, they will quickly vpbrayde, and cast each other in the teeth. Therefore here is a great vertue to be imitated.

In the words that follow, there is yet a further and a more ample declaration of the glorious beauty and rich decking of the Church. The first part of the words are thus: *There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore Concubines, and virgins without number.* We reade that King Salomon had seven hundred Queenes, and three hundred

dred Concubines, 1. King 11. 31. If these be the wiues and Concubines of Salomon, which are here mentioned, then he wrote this song before he did come to that former excesſiue number. But it seemeth to me that he doth not ſpeake of Salomons Queenes and concubines, but as if hee ſhould ſay, let there bee threescore Queenes and foreſcore concubines, and Virgins without number. Or thus, howſoeuer it be that there be many Queenes, and many concubines, with an infinite number of virgins. Queenes are of great dignity, they bee attyred with coſtly things. And the Kings in old time had alſo beſide their Queenes, Concubines; theſe were beautifull and in rich attire, according to the glory of Princes. Then alſo the Queenes (as it is the manner) had their maidens of honour to attend vpon them, and likewiſe virgins did waite vpon the Concubines, ſo that here is a very great number of beautifull damſels, which are alſo in goodly attire. Then in a word, to come to the matter, thus it is, if the Lord ſhould ſay, ſet all the goodly Queenes and Concubines of the great Kings and Princes of the world, with all the

the companie of their Virgines together, it is a goodly shew, there is glorie, beautie, and riches, but yet they are nothing comparable to my Loue, her beautie and glorie, farre excelleth them all; For, you see how he addeth in the next verse, *but my doue is alone*. How is she alone? She is alone, or she is onely beautifull, rich, and honorable. The birth, or the honour touching the parentage of Queenes, the beauty and decking of Concubines and virgins, is great and highly esteemed in the eyes of the world: but it is not comparable to the honor, beauty, and rich ornaments of my doue, of my vndefiled, she standeth alone in all excellency. All these Queenes and goodly women come not nigh her in any thing, she is without peere. For let vs consider euery particular. It is a thing of great account in the world to be the daughters of mighty Princes, to be the wiues and concubines of Kings: but what is the dignity of this their birth, if you doe compare it with the dignity and honour of the birth of the Church? It is a spirituall birth, yea the faithfull bee all borne of God. Then looke how the Lord God farre excelleth in honour the
Kings

Kings of the earth, so his children excell their children, but they cannot giue vnto them the honour of this Heauenly byrth, the Church only hath it, and therefore he saith, she is the onely daughter of her mother, deare vnto her that bare her, or as the word is, pure to her that broght her forth. This it is, *Ierusalem* (as S. Paul saith) *which is frō aboue, which is mother of vs all*, she is mother of the whole church vpon earth: & she is Mother vnto none else. All that be her children, be the children of the most High. Thus we see how for dignity and honour in birth, she farre excelleth all the Queenes in the world. Then if we respect beautie and rich ornaments, what is all the beautie of the Queenes, the concubines, and maydens of Honour, and all their gorgious attyre and iewells, compared with her spirituall ornaments and beautie, euen the rich graces of the holy Ghost, by which shee is comly in the eyes of God? Behold how honourable, and how beautifull they be in the eyes of God, which are rich in Faith. And albeit our blind nature is such, as it is much moued with the pompe and glittering shew of the world, and cānot see into the glorie & riches of Faith: or with what
good.

goodly ornaments it decketh the soule, especially in poor men, which are in base estate: yet it pleaseth God sometime to make the great ones in the world even to wonder at the beautie and glorie of his church. And therefore it is added, the daughters haue seen her, and counted her blessed, the Queens and concubines, and they praised her. Then as I say, sometimes the Lords people, the Lords Nation, hath bin so honoured by God here in the world, even in the sight of men, that the very Heather nations haue confessed that they were hapie, God had done great things for them. And marke the order heere vsed for their praise: For he saith first, *that the Daughters saw her, and counted her Blessed.*

These be the virgins that hee spake of, which are without number. These virgins do much behold the beauty of the quees and concubines: yea, they looke also vpon their owne rich Attire, and they account these great things, but so soon as euer they behold her, she so dimmeth all their beautie and glory, so that they set their Eyes vpon her, and pronounce her blessed.

Yea, the Queens and the concubines also which glory in their own pompe and dig-

nitie, do extoll her. For in the next verse the speech of their wonderment at her, is thus expressed, *Who is this that looketh forth as the Morning, fayre as the Moone, pure as the Sunne, terrible as an Armeý with Banners?* Here be foure things, by which (as you see) they commend her wonderfull beautie. The first is the Morning, for they wondering, demaund: Who is this that looketh forth as the Morning?

It is a most goodly sight to see how the bright Morning spreadeth forth: And also the Moone, which is the seconde, when it is cleare, sheweth a great beauty in the night. But the brightnes and puritie of the Sunne, vnto which they liken her in the third place, is farre beyond all.

And then in the last place, they say that she is terrible as an Armeý with banners, This terror as we noted before, is chiefly to the infernall spirites, even the Diuells, against whom she is armed with the whole armour of Cod: but yet these also, doe acknowledge a terrour and a Maiestie.

They that are conuersant in reading the holy Scriptures can tell, that God hath sundry times greatly magnified his church in the eyes of the worlde.

Now

Now let vs consider the whole matter to our owne comfort. How good is our estate, how well is it with vs : euen when wee be poore, and base, and miserable in the world, if wee be of this number? We are not Kings, we are not Queens, we are not great Lords ; we are not Ladyes, wee are not in wealth, nor in pleasures : Let vs neuer in murmuring sorte thinke that the Lord hath dealt more hardly with vs, because hee hath not giuen vs these : but let vs consider that he giueth vs the greater, euen the things which excell all the glorie of this world. Yea, and let Queens and great Ladyes learne heere, that their greatest glorie is not in their parentage, in their beautie, riches and ornaments, but if they be the true children of the church, if they be regenerate, euen born of God, and decked with the giftes and graces of the holie Ghost : let them, I say, learne if they will be wise, to esteeme this heavenly byrth, these spirituall treasures and beauty aboue all other. We hold it great follie, euen in Kings and Queenes, and in all the great Lordes and Ladyes, if they so stand vpon the honour of their byrth, and doe so glorie in their worldly pomp and riches, and

are so crowned in earthly pleasures, as they thinke not vppon, nor esteeme the dignitie of the spirituall byrth, but set light by the Heauenly ornaments: because in so dooing, they esteeme very drosse aboute the pure Gold.

How then can we be excused? which hauing but euen as it were droppes, yea, but the scraps or crummies of these worldly things, wherewith Kings and Queenes abound, do yet so esteem them, as that we looke not after those great things, which are bestowed vpon the Church: for, we esteeme euen the drosse of drosse, aboute all. Let therefore this great prayse, which the Lord giueth to his Spouse, that set all the Queenes and Honourable-women in the world together, their dignitie, beautie, and rich Ornaments, are nothing vnto hers, moue vs to seeke to be of that Societie.

Is not this a worthie thing to be considered? Is it not a singular comfort, that there is more dignitie, more honour, more true glory and riches in the soule of one poore man or woman, that hath the true & liuelie Faith of Christ, then there is in all the Kings and Queenes of the Earth? It may be obiected, that the glorie of the Kings is
grea

greater then the glory of the Queenes: then seeing the Lord dooth meane to commend the dignity and beautie of his Spouse by comparison, why doeth hee not compare her with the highest? For answer to this, you must note that the Church is brought in vnder the person of a woman, and therefore she is compared with women.

As a Queene shee is compared with other Queenes, and shee standeth alone in her glory. Also this is to bee vnderstood, that by the Queenes and Concubines, and Virgins, are meant the Nations kingdoms & prouinces with all their glory: whereby you may see that the highest glory of Kings and Princes is comprehended. Wee will proceed: *I went downe to the garden of Nuts, to see the fruites of the valley, to see if the Vine budded, and if the Pome-granates flourished. I knew not, my soule set me as the Chariots of my noble people.*

Hitherto, as you haue scene, in this Chapter, Christ hath highly commended his Church, to this end as I noted vnto you, that he had quite forgotten her vnkind dealing towards him, and that there

remayned no blot of her offence, but all is washed away vpon her hearty repentance, and earnest seeking after him. Yet he withdrew himselfe at the time of her vnkind dealing: but not for any loathing, but for another purpose, as heere now he mentioneth. For this is out of doubt, that the Lord dooth here speake to comfort his Spouse, and not to mention any thing to vpbraid her withall. He maketh mention of a going downe vnto her, hee speaketh of a time past, even that time which is mentioned in the former Chapter, when he found her a sleepe. The Church is called a Garden, *I went down to the garden*, sayth he. And heere it is translated, the garden of nuts: beeing generally so taken by the Hebrew Rabbines. The word which they take to signifie the nut, is not found elsewhere in all the scriptures. And surely it seemeth a straunge manner of speech to say, I went down to the garden of nuts: and then mentioneth not that he went to see the nut-trees, but to see the fruits of the valley, whether the vine did budde, or Pomegranates flourished. They doe but guesse that the word should signifie eyther nut, or nut tree. It

is farre more fitte to take it thus, I went downe to the dressed garden. For *Egoz* which is taken to bee the nut, may be deriued of *gazaz*, which signifieth to cut or to share. And so as I sayde, it seemeth most fitte to take it thus: I went downe into the dressed garden. For by this speech may bee vnderstood all the cost and labor which the Lord bestowed vpon his vineyard, by the hands of his seruants the prophets and Apostles, and by the Ministry of all other faithfull teachers. Looke where planting, watering, dressing, and al manner of labour and cost is bestowed, there fruites are expected: and therefore it followeth, that the Lord went downe to this his garden, to see the fruites of the valley, to see if the vine budded, and if the Pome-granates flourished. Now heere the Spouse faulted: for shee was fallen into security, and did not bring forth fruites answerable vnto so great graces as were bestowed vpon her.

Wee must needs confesse this, that where much hath beene bestowed, much is required: and yet the faithfull oftentimes which haue had great teaching, daily admonitions, and many giftes of the

holy Ghost, doe faile thus farre, that their fruites are but slender.

Many complaints of this you shall find in the Prophets and great afflictions for the same. And here the Lord sayeth, *I did not know*. What did hee not know? Not such a flourishing of the plantes as ought to haue beene. And here as it seemeth, now after her repentance, the speech is mitigated, least he should seeme to charge her ouer seuerely. For among men things are sometime, which when they do not flatly deny to haue beene, they say they knew not. But doth not Christ here vpbraid his Church? No verily, but hee mentioneth her fault, to this ende that she may bee comforted, by knowing to what end hee seemed to depart after he had raised her out of her sleepe. His affection is great towards her, which doth cause him to seeke her speedy repentance. Hee departeth away most swiftly, as he sayth: *My soule set me vpon the chariots of my noble people*: or as the word doth signifie, *of my franke or willing people*. The willingnes of the minde carrieth one speedily. Thus it is then, as if a Louer should make all hast to fetch his friendes and companions to
ac.

accompanie him to meete his Spouse, and to beholde her comelincesse and beaurty in seeking to come vnto him. In the church when shee hath offended, and doth repent, there is a great glory of God sette forth, and a right ioyfull spectacle to the holy Angels of heauen, which doe reioyce when sinners are conuerted to the Lord.

Therefore in the next words he calleth vpon her to returne. Why had shee not returned? had shee not sought him, confessing and bewayling her offence: yes: He doth not vtter this speech vnto her now: *Returne, returne, O Shulamite, returne, returne, that wee may looke vpon thee:* for what needed this vehement calling of her to repentance now, when shee had so earnestly sought him? But he mentioneth how he called vpon her, when she refused to open vnto him. Shee is called the Shulamite of Ierusalem, which was called *Shalem*, the name beeing deriued from peace: for the Church is at peace with God. He sayde, *Returne, returne, and wee will looke vpon thee.* Euen hee with his companions. And then to stirre vp the same his companions to beholde the

the beauty and glory of her comming, he sayeth: *What shall you see in the Shulamite* and addeth, *as the company of Machanaim.*

The word signifieth the companies or tents of two armies that meet. When *Iacob* returned from *Laban*, as you may reade, *Gen, 32. ver. 1.* the Angels of God met him, and when *Iacob* saw them he sayde, *This is Gods hoste*, and called the name of the same place *Machanaim*. Vnto this ioyfull meeting of these two Armies, the Angels on the one part, and *Iacob* with his companions on the other, the Lord doth likê the returning of his spouse vnto him: he with his holy Angels being one armie, and shee with her company another. A most ioyfull meeting, a glorious sight. Surely, wee are fallen a sleepe, and I suppose that before the Lord depart, and wee bee afflicted, we wil not awake to seeke him.

THE



The twelfth Sermon.

CHAP. VII.

1 How beautifull are thy goings with shoes
O Princes daughter? the ioyntes of thy thighs
are like iewels, the worke of the hands of a
cunning workeman.

2 Thy nauill is as a round cuppe that
wanteth not liquor, thy belly is as an heape of
wheat, compassed about with Lillies.

3 Thy two brests are as two young Roes
that are twins.

4 Thy necke is as a Tower of Iuorie: thine
eyes are like the fishpooles in Heshbone, by the
gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower
of Lebanon that looketh toward Damasens.

5 Thine head vpon thee is as skarlet, and
the bush of thine head like purple: the King is
tyed in the rasters.

6 How sayre art thou, and how pleasant
art

art thou, O my loue in pleasures ?

7 This thy stature is like a Palme tree, & thy breasts are like clusters.

8 I sayde I wil goe vp into the palme tree, I will take hold of her boughes: thy breasts shall now be like clusters of the vine, and the savour of thy nose like apples.

9 And the rooofs of thy mouth like good wine, which goeth straight to my wel-beloued, and causeth the lips of the auncient to speake.



Here is now an other commendation of the Church, by her seuerall partes. If you demand why this is: seeing heere is no speech of the Church, nor nothing that hath fallen out between the former commendation and this. Heere is a new occasion for all that of praising the Spouse. For as I noted, the former was for to comfort her, and to rayse her vp, after her afflictions and sorrowes, by assuring her that she was euen as precious and beautifull in his Eyes, as she was before her vnkinde dealing.

And

And now hauing shewed that his withdrawing himselfe was for her good, euen to call her by a most serious Repentance: This calling did take effect, she did return vnto him; And now this commendation, which is from the feet to the head, sheweth how comly and delectable she was in her repentance, or in her returning vnto him. We may learne then how pleasant a thing it is in the eyes of the Lord, when his people that haue stepped awry and gon astray doe returne vnto him by vnfayned repentance. But let vs come to the words of the text. *How beautifull are thy goings with shoes O Princes daughter?* The word is, *thy goings, or thy treadings, or thy steps, or thy feete.* The sence indeed cometh all to one, whether we take it of the feete, or of the treadings: for the beautie of the Feete, is in the right steppes. Here therefore by a word of admiration or wonderment is set forth how exceeding comely and beautyfull her feete and steps be: For he saith, *How beautifull are thy goings?*

When men depart away from the Lord, their steps be vnseemly, their waies be *crooked waies*, euen such as the Lord God doth abhor. But the Church seeking after Christ, in
such

such sort as you haue seen before, & approaching neerer & neerer vnto him, her steps her treadings, her feete, & all her wayes, are maruellous beautyfull in his eyes. And it is chiefly heere to be noted, that hee doth mention her shoes. Our translation saith, *How beautifull are thy goings with shoes?* but more fullie to expresse the Sence, and according to the very words, we are to translate it thus: *How beautyfull are thy steps, or thy feete with those shoes?* For there is (as I may call it) the note of the demonstratiue particle. They be in deed a special kinde of shoes, which shee had now on, which make her feete and goings so beautifull. You will demaund what shoes be these? And I doe demaund what bee the shoes which the Apostle willethe the faithfull to bee shod withall? *Ephes: 6.* You know he saith, *your feete being shod,* and then he nameth with what shoes, saying: *with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.* vers. 15. The Bride had now got on these shoes, her Feet being shod, with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. The Gospel is the message of Peace and reconciliation, between God and the world: assuring all those of true Blessednes which come vnto him:

him: this doth prepare and arme their feet
to go through all the difficulties of the way,
which are very many, and very sharpe. For
he that hath once receyued the Faith, and
vndoubted hope of the promises of the
Gospell, what difficultie in the way shall
keepe him backe? True it is, that the Di-
uell doth make the way exceeding rugged
and painefull to discourage, but the Bride
is so shod that she dooth not shrinke, but
treadeth down all. And this is that which
is so pleasant in the Eyes of the Lord. In
her carnall security, when she was asleepe,
and he with most louing speeches called
vpon her, to open vnto him, her feete were
not so well shod: For then, *I haue put off
my coate, how shall I put it on: I haue washed
my feete how shall I defile them?* Then e-
uery litle matter in her way did withhold:
but now, let there be what daungers, what
Enemyes soeuer or difficultyes, shee will
through, and she will not giue ouer vntill
she finde him. And vppon this he cryeth
out: *How beautifull are thy goings with those
shoes, Oh Princes daughter?* When men
walke in their owne wayes, their steps are
not good in the sight of the Lord, how soe-
uer men think highly of their own inuen-
tions:

tions: but when the Gospell doth prepare their feete to seeke the Lord, that is acceptable. Oh, let vs then (beloued) get on those shooes, which shall make our feete and our treadings so beautifull in the sight of the Lord. And which will also make vs so honourable in his sight, which he expresseth in the next words, saying: *O Princes daughter*. The Church is a most honourable Virgin, fit by her Parentage & birth, to be the wife of so great a King: For, she is the daughter of the Prince of all Princes, seeing *all the Faithfull are borne of God*. Indeed there is no worldly byrth nor parentage of that dignitie, to make a meete Spouse for Christ: For, what are men in themselves? But the heauenly birth, which is not of the will of man, but of God, is of most high dignitie. The Soule which is born of God, is neerly ioined vnto Christ, for the regeneration is in Christ. Therefore (I say) seeke true repentance, which is a most precious iewel.

It followeth, *The ioynts of thy thighes are like iewels, the worke of the hands of a cunning workeman*. Here also is a word not found else-where in the Scriptures. It is translated in our English, *the ioyntes*. The word doth

dooth signifie turnings, or things that doe compasse about. It may indeed be referred to the ioyntes, or it may be taken for the gyrdle. For, it was the manner that the Bryde did weare a gyrdle, of goodly rich and costly iewels. And here they are likened vnto jewells, made by a cunning workman. Then hee compareth the nauell to a rounde cup, that wanteth not liquour. A Childe in the Wombe of his Mother, receyueth his nourishment by the Nauell: heere is comparison therefore of a cup, that hath also in it for nourishment.

Then he saith, that *her belly is as an heape of wheate compassed about with lyllys*. Here is fruitfulness represented by the heape of wheate, and heere is pleasant sweetnes resembled by the lillyes. Her two breasts are compared as before in this Song. I will not stand againe vpon any interpretation. *Her necke is as a tower of yuorie*. This comparison dooth not much differ from that former, where hee saith, *thy necke is as the tower of David buylt for an Armorie*: sauing that there he respecteth force, making mention of the shields of the mighty, and here the tower is of precious matter, and of
X a faire

faire colour, the *ynorie* being a cleer white. *Thine Eyes are as the Fish-pooles in Hesbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim.* These were pooles of goodly cleere and pure water, at that gate in Ierusalem, by which the greatest concourse of people was entring in, and going out, for which cause the gate is called *Bathrabbim*, *Bath* is as much as to say the daughter, and *rabbim*, is of manie

Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, that looketh toward Damascus. This was a goodly tower in the house which *Salomon* built in the Forrest of *Lebanon*. Heere are the goodlyest and the stateliest things vppon Earth, brought in to resemble the Spouse. *Thine head vppon thee*, or as some doe take it, *in thine head*, that which is vppon thee, referring it to the attire of her head, *is like skarlet, and the bush of thine head like Purple.* The word *dallath*, signifieth that which is made smal or slender: wherefore some take it for the haire of the head, for the smalnes of them, & some for the laces, that bindeth vpon the haire. The matter is not great, but in the next clause there is some difficulty. *The King is tyed in the rasters*, saith our English translation. What meaneth that? That the King is affected to be neer his Spouse, and

to behold her beauty & comlynes. Some do expound it thus: A King would betyed in his galleryes. As if hee should say, there is not any King that walketh in the midst of his glorie, even in his goodly galleries, but if he should behold thy beautie and glorie, it would cause him to stand amazed, he would no more looke vpon his owne glorie but vpon thine: so faire dooth thine excell all the glorie of this world. Surely eyther of these doth highly commend the beautie of the Church. If Christ be tyed in the galleries to behold her, or if an Earthly king would stand amazed at the sight of her beauty: the doth it farre surmount all the glorie and riches of this world. There be others that haue taken it thus: *Thy bush of haire is like the purple of a King, hanged or tyed in the galleries.* The distinguishing accent gainsayeth this: but it seemeth to be the most native sense of the wordes. The Galleryes & large rooms of Kings were hanged with goodly Hangings of purple, or of some such rich stuffe: vnto these hangings the haire of the Spouse may bee compar'd. Euery way it setteth foorth the comelynes and beauty of the Spouse, and therefore not

much materiall which sence wee follow. Well, the Bride-groome hauing thus praised the beauty and comlynes of his spoule by seuerall partes : Now hee doth breake forth into an admiration, and great wonderment at her beautie in the whole, or in all layde together, saying : *How faire art thou, and how pleasant art thou, O my lone in pleasures ?* This is brought in vppon all those former particulars : and therefore the words do stand thus for the sence: *O lone, or, O my lone how faire art thou, and how pleasant art thou in enery respect, or in all partes, or rather, in all these heaped up in one ?* For, as you see, hee hath gone by particulars, from the foote to the head. First, *How beautilfull are thy goings with shooes, O Princes daughter ?* Then, *the ioynts of thy thighs are as iewells, the worke of the handes of a cunning workman.* After this, hee speaketh of the nauell, which he likeneth vnto a round cup, that wanteth not liquor. Also her belly is compared to an heape of wheat, compassed about with lyllyes. Her two breasts are as two young Roes that are twinnes. And so he ascendeth, and saith : Her necke is as a tower of yuorie : her eyes as the fish pooles of Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim,

rabbim. Her nose as the tower of Lebanon, that looketh towards Damascus: her head like skarlet, and her hayre, like the purple of a King hanged in the galleryes. In summe her beautie is wonderfull in all parts: she is comely throughout. We see beauty and comelines in men and women oftentimes, but not in all parts alike: for sometime a beautifull, a comely, and pleasant face, but not so comely a bodie. Or a comely bodie, but not so well-fauoured a face. Or if face and body be comely, yet some defect in one part or other. This is not so in the Church of Christ: For, shee in euery part is beautifull, delectable, and full of glorie.

Moreover, that Christ doth speake of her beautie in way of wonderment, it is from the heaping vp of all those particulars together (as I said) in one. For where there be many goodly things, and euery one by it selfe to be wondered at for beautie, how much may they be wondered at, when they come all together to be heaped vp in one? Take it thus, the Lord doth bestow many goodly things vpon his Church, he dooth decke her with many rich Ornaments, euery one of these is to bee wondered at

for excellencie, the how much more when they come altogether? But heere is another circumstance that dooth augment the matter: and that is from the person of him that hath her beautie in admiration. It is the Lord *IESVS* who doth wonder at her beautie: he cannot wonder at a mean thing. Lay all the glorie of Kings before him, and it is but drosse, he cannot wonder thereat: for what is it to the glorie which hee doth inherite and dwell in? What is the glory and beautie of the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres vnto him? Doth hee wonder at them? Surely he wondreth at the beautie of his Church; how excellent then is her beauty and glory? They be rare things that Princes vppon Earth doe wonder at: most rare which the King of Kings hath in admiration. Oh ten times happy are they, which shalbe partakers of so great glorie! But may some men say, where is that companie in the world which is so goodly to behold? We see in all Churches that basenes and simplicitie which the world despiseth. We see also many deformities, and spots of sinne in the best. In a word, wee can see no matter of wonder, vnlesse it be this, that wee may wonder how Christ should

should deeme her so beautifull? I do answer vnto this, that men are blinde in discerning the beauty and excellencie of spirituall ornaments. Also they bee malignant, and for some deformities despise and depraue very excellent thinges. Yea but Christ speaketh as if all were beautifull. That in respect of the full beautie & glorie which he will put vpon his spouse. For herein the Lord beholdeth her, as hee will make her to himselfe a glorious Church, not hauing spot or wrinkle. There is in the *Faithfull* that which is beautifull and pleasant in the Eyes of the Lord, euen the manifold gifts and graces of his Spirit: but the beauty which he so highly comendeth and wondereth at, is rather in that which she shall be, which he now beholdeth.

But what meaneth this, that hee dooth not only call her his loue, but his loue in pleasures, in delights, or in the things which we esteeme as daintyes? Surely this doth much augmente the matter, this is a very forcible speech to declare his exceeding affection towards her. We know men doe loue things, and take delight, but there be degrees in their loue: they may loue things very well, yet that is the highest when they

take their chiefe pleasure & delight in that which they loue. So Christ sheweth here that he taketh delight and pleasure in his faire Spouse, shee is euen a dearling and a dainty vnto him. They be much deceyued then, which suppose that Christ maketh but as it were a common account of his Church.

Then he addeth, *This, thy stature is like the Palmetree, and thy breasts like clusters.* The Palm-tree is of stature tall and straight, she is resembled therby. Also they say, that it is the nature of that tree, not to be pressed downe with weight, but groweth vp the more. Surely the holy Spouse is not bowed downe, nor made crooked by wayght, and burden of afflictions. But wee shall see afterwarde how hee prosecuteth this comparison, in which hee doth liken her vnto the Palme tree, what a promise hee maketh vnto her, and what a blessing doth follow from the same.

And now that hee saith, *Her breasts are like clusters,* it is to be vnderstood (as it seemeth by the next verse) of the clusters of the Vine, a sweete and a wholsome Fruite, and so the breastes of the Church, by which shee nourisheth all her children, are

replenished with very sweet milke.

We haue spoken of this before, what the breasts are, and what that sincere milk is, by which the Faithfull are nourished. The truth is, that albeit the Testaments be the Lords, & not the word or doctrine of Man, yet they are thus farre become the breastes of the Church, that none can sucke from them the wholsome nourishment, vnles he take them as her breasts.

I meane thus: Some will say the Word is the Lordes, wee are not to respect men: And so they would seeme to haue the vse and benefit of the Word of God, to give them life, or nourish and feede them: But they despise the Church, they condemne her, and separate themselues from her. These can haue no Saluation by the word of GOD, though they haue it in their handes, and reade it: for the Lorde hath made it the wholsome food of life, as it commeth out of the breastes of the holy Church.

Let vs then take heede, least with Schismatiques, Heretikes, and Sectaries, wee separate not our selues, from her that hath these breasts, and which alone doth bring forth and nourish vp children to God.

Now

Now followeth a promise of the dressing this palme tree, and a declaration of the fruitfulnessse that shall spring from the same dressing. The promise is in these wordes: *I haue saide I will goe vpp into the Palme tree, I will take hold of her boughes.* The declaration of the fruitfulnessse is in these wordes: *and thy breasts shall now be like the clusters of the vine, and the sauour of thy nose like apples. And the roose of thy mouth like good wine, which goeth straight to my welbeloued, and causeth the lippes of the auncient to speake.* Touching the former of these, that is the promise which Christ maketh of dressing his Church, the speech is framed according to the maner of dressing the palme trees: for hauing compared her to a palme tree, he continueth the allegoric. The husbandmen when they did dresse and trim their palme trees, wēt vp into them, and so laide hold of euerie bough to dresse the same. According to this, the Lord saith here, *I haue saide*, that is, I haue decreed, I haue promised, and I will performe it, that I will go vpp into the Palme tree, and I will lay hold of her boughs. Which then you see, is as much as to say, I will dresse my palme tree. For
the

the Lord doth bestow all maner of dressing & trimming of his Church, to make her fruitfull. And this wanteth not effect: for hee declareth how fruitfull and how exceeding sweet shee shall become by this dressing. First hee saith, *her breasts shall be as clusters of the vine.* Hee saide, that they were like clusters before, and nowe they shall be more. It may be sayd: how can that bee, are not her breasts alwayes the same? is not the word of God in the Testaments alwaies one? it is alwaies one & the same: but the Church doth minister the word as it were out of her breasts more abundantly, and in more excellent maner then at another. Her breasts then are alwaies like clusters of the vine, there is in them a right holesome & sweete iuyce: but when the Lord powreth forth vpon her the greatest measure of his spirit, then doth she in most plenteous maner drawe forth her breasts, and minister food vnto her children. The Church of Rome hath remoued away the sincere milke of Gods worde from her children, bearing them in hand that it is no better then poison: and she draweth forth other breasts, which are full of the swill and dregs of
her

her owne inuentions, and with the same shee doth nourish, or rather kill and murder. Let vs earnestly craue of the Lord, that in these our dayes he will go vp into his palme tree, & lay hold on her boughs, that so her breasts may bee as clusters of grapes, yea that the heavenly doctrine may bee sincerely and plenteously vttered. There bee many that holde the places of Pastors, which be like drie nurses. There bee that handle the worde so as it doth little good to the hearers.

Let vs proceed: he saith, *And the saueur of thy nose like apples.* Men doe vsually breath at their nose: then this is to declare that the Church shall breath out nothing but sweetnes. All that approach neer vnto her, shall smell the saueur of her sweete breath. Let vs well consider of this, euen to trie our selues whether wee be of the Church: for many doe boast and brag that they bee true children of the Church, which yet breath out nothing but a stincking breath. Yea their breath is so lothsome to al that can smell, that it cannot be endured. Are these then of the Church? Is the saueur of their nose as the saueur of apples?

Lastly

Lastly hee saith: *And the roose of thy mouth like good wine, &c.* The roose of the mouth is here put for that which proceedeth out of the mouth. And if any shall demaunde, What is that which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Church? I answer, it is the holy word & doctrine of the Lord, which she doth professe, and publish. This liuely word is here likened vnto good wine, which is described in the latter part of the verse, by the property, and by the effect. Our English translation for the one sayth, *It goeth straight to my welbeloued*: and for the other, that *it causeth the lips of the auncient to speake*: The words stand thus, going to loues, to rightnes, which may rightly in the phrase of our tongue be sayde, mouing it selfe in most louely manner and most rightly: for so doth the mighty strong wine moue it selfe when it is powred into the cup. And then for the latter clause, that it maketh to speake the lips of the auncient. *Isa*han in the Hebrew doth signifie to sleepe, and to wax olde. Hereupon some say, it causeth the auncient to speake, Which is no small effect, seeing men that are very olde haue their senses dulled, and are very slow to speake

speake. The mighty wine doth moue & quicken the dull spirits, euen of the aged, Or as others do take it, that it causeth the lips of them that be asleep to speake, That is more, yea if we consider it in the similitude, it is hyperbolicall: but in the thing represented, that is the preaching of the Gospell, it is most true. For thus it is, the word which proceedeth from the mouth of the Church is as strong wine that moueth and quickeneth the dull spirits, not only as it were in men whose senses are dulled with age, but euen in those that be a sleep, yea in a dead sleep of sinne. It rayseth and quickeneth such, it causeth their lips to speake the prayes of God, which before had no power that way. O beloved if wee bee not in a dead sleep, yet to speake holy things, to speake to the prayes of the Lord and edification of our brethren wee are as olde men: let vs receiue this strong wine from the mouth of the Church which may quicken
our spirits
(∴)

THE



The thirteenth Sermon.

CHAP. VII. & VIII.

10. *I am my welbeloued, and his desire is towards mee.*

11. *Come my welbeloued, let vs goe forth into the Field, let vs remaine in the villages.*

12. *Let vs get vp early to the Vines, let vs see if the vine flourish, whether it hath budded the small Grape, whether the Pome-granates flourish, there will I giue thee my loue.*

13. *The mandrakes haue giuen a smell, and in our gates are all sweete things new and old: my Welbeloued I haue kept them for thee.*

1. *Oh that thou werest as my Brother, that sucked the breasts of my Mother: I would finde thee without, I would kisse thee, then they should not despise mee.*

2. *I will leade thee, and bring thee into my Mo-*

Mothers house: there shalt thou teach me: It will cause thee to drinke spiced wine, and new wine of the Pome-granate.

3. *His left hand shall be under mine head, and his right hand shall embrace mee.*

4. *I charge you, O Daughters of Ierusalem, that you styrre not up, nor wake not my Love, vntill shee please.*



WE haue heard the great praise & commendation which Christ giueth to his Spouse, first to comfort her, by letting her vnderstand for certainty, that the blot of her offence was vtterly taken away, her comlynes and beautie was no lesse in his Eyes then before: & secondly, that it may appeare what a glorious thing in the sight of God, true repentance is. Moreouer in the last place, we haue seene the promise of the Lord, what hee would do for his church, & how fruitfull, sweet, & precious she shuld become therby. Now the Church answereth, expressing at large her affection & duty towards Christ: that seeing his kindnes had been so great

to

towards her, she doth euen as it were dedicate, vow, and consecrate her selfe, and all that she hath vnto him, hasting in desire, & longing for the day of the marriage. Here is no more alteration in the Church: but as the Song began, with her great desires of Christ, so it endeth. For, howsoeuer the faithfull doe slippe and fall, swarue, and go astray for a time, yet they rise againe, they returne into the right way.

But let vs come to her words, *I am my wel-beloued, and his affection is towards mee.* The coniunction may more rightly betaken thus, seeing or because his affection is towards mee. For in the former clause of the sentence she professeth & voweth her selfe and all that she hath wholly to Christ, saying, *I am my welbeloued*: and in the other clause shee rendreth a reason, saying, *because his affection is towards me.* His kindnes then towards her wrought this effect, that she and all hers shalbe dedicated vnto him. The cause goeth before the effect, and therefore let vs first speake of that. For the summe of her speech commeth to this much in effect: seeing my Spouse hath set his affection so vppon me, and frely loued me, when I was vtterly turned away from
Y him.

him, when I was his enemy. Rom: 8. When I was dead in sinnes and trespasses. Ephes. 2. When I had nothing in me but that which was vncleane and abhominable, Rom: 3. Moreouer, seeing his affection towards me is so constant, that hauing Redeemed me, called, and sanctified mee with his Spirit, garnishing and decking me with his heauenly gifts and graces, and I shewing my selfe vnkinde, and very vndutifull towards him, defiling and deforming my selfe, yet his loue continueth one, hee doth forgieue me, he doth imbrace me, he doth account me as faire and precious, as if I had neuer sinned against him: Is there not great cause that I should wholly be his? No man can denie the reason of this. Such abundant Loue dooth craue loue againe. And now consider what it is, when she sayth, *I am my welbeloueds*. For though it be set first, yet it dependeth (as I sayde) vpon the latter. If shee be his, then is she not her owne. Shee is not to liue to herselfe, or to the Flesh, but vnto **CHRIST**. This is it that Saint Peter sayth, *That henceforth we should not liue after the lusts of men, but after the will of God.* 1. Pet: 4. vers. 2. This is when the faithfull do loue, obey & ho.

honour the Lord, for if they doe not loue him, how are they his? If they do not obey him, how doe they loue him? This saith Saint Iohn, *is the lone of God, if wee keepe his commandements.* 1. Iohn, 5.

And if men breake the commandements, and liue in euill vices, how doe they honour the Lorde? You see therefore how the Church sayth, *I am my Wel-beloueds*: The whole-man, both Bodie and Soule is consecrated vnto Christ.

Here wee may see plainely, that such as walke in wickednesse, neuer feelee the louing kindnes of the Lord. They haue not the true and liuely Faith. For this is Faith, when the Soule feeleth assuredly, that Christ hath set his affection vpon her, hee hath Redeemed and sanctified her, he wipeeth away all her spots, and healeth all her infirmities. Though shee offend, yet his loue and kindnesse dooth remaine.

Now from the feeling of this, it cannot be, but the soule is euen rauished with loue towards him, and giueth vp herselfe to do that which may delight and please him. So that (as I saide) such as leade a wicked life, neuer felt the loue and kindnes of the Lorde, they neuer had the true and liuely

Faith. Beloued, if any man bee desirous to be Christs, (that is to say) if he wil loue, obey, and honour him: if he will not liue to himselfe but to the Lord: heere is the head and the fountaine, when shee sayeth, *I am my Wel-beloueds, because his affection is towards mee*: Let him first apprehend the loue & affectiō of Christ. For, that loue of **CHRIST** (as Saint *Paule* speaketh) will constraينه him to loue againe. And before a man do feele that **GOD** hath loued him, hee may as it were force himselfe to speake and doe good things, but they can not be acceptable: for they doe not proceede from a franke and free heart, they spring not from loue.

What is it, when a man eyther of a seruile feare, or from some sinister respect, dooth abstaine from that which is euill, if his heart within doe loue and delight in it? Or what good dooth hee, which outwardly with his handes perfourmeth some good deedes, which his heart delighteth not in? And now behold how forward and readie the Bryde is, to performe her dutie, and to haue the day of the marriage approach. She is not the woman that shee before was in the fifth Chapter, where

where shee made excuses, and would not arise to open to Christ: for now shee calleth vnto him, saying, *Come my welbeloued let vs goe forth into the field, let vs lodge in the villages,* or as it may be translated, at the Cyprus trees. The Lord did promise in the former Chapter, that he would goe vp into the palme tree, and take holde of her boughes, he would dresse his Church, and shee should thereupon become most flourishing, fruitful and delectable, vnto this shee offereth her seruice. It is vnto this for it could bee no prayse in her to moue him vnto any thing which hee had not promised. She doth not name the palme tree, but Cyprus trees, and the vines: but the matter is all one, seeing the Church is resembled by the one, as well as by the other.

Then thus it is, the Lord promiseth to dresse and trim his Church, shee offereth her selfe most cheerefull and willing therunto. He will bestow his rich graces and gifts vpon her, and she is euen on thirst for them. It becommeth all the faithfull, when the Lord promiseth his graces & heauen-blessings to shew themselves forward, and readie to receyue them, and to put to all

their care and diligence, that their hearts may be sanctified and purged, that so they may be fit to bring forth sweet fruites. The Lorde dooth call them to arise from the delight of these Earthly things, and to set their affections on things that be aboue: so the Bryde here offereth herselfe to goe forth into the Fieldes, and euen to lodge among the *Cyprius*-trees, that shee may rise vp early in the morning, to goe to the Vines. She is now so rapt with the loue and desire of Heauenly thinges, that her minde and her affections are carryed out of the world, she will now euen lodge in a continual meditation and delight of them, yea, she will daily raise vp herselfe early to behold the fruit that doth spring fro them. This is a maruellous good estate and right commendable, that she is now in. Before this, she was layde downe on sleepe in her bed, shee was loath to be rayfed vp.

Behold here the difference of the godly after their afflictions, from that they were when worldly ease and prosperitie had taken hold on them. Then the gifts of the spirite lye as it were buried, and all groweth euen as it were rustie: but when the fiery tryall commeth, when they be cast as
gold

Gold into the furnace, the drosse is burned out, they shine bright, they be raised vp and quickned. These things (I say) wee may beholde in her forwardnes, ouer that shee was in the fift chapter. This may teach vs to feare our selues in our long prosperitie that we haue enioied here in this our land. We haue had it so long, that we do scarce thinke of afflictions: and greatly it is to be desired that such Peace might stil cōtinue, so it might not be to our great harm. But hath not our prosperitie euen drawne the hearts of the most which professe the Gospell, into carnall securitie? Do we now say (as the Bride here) *Come my wel-baloued, let vs goe out into the field, let vs lodge among the Cyprus-trees, let vs rise vppe early to the Vines: let vs see if the vine flourish, &c.*

Are we thus ready and forwards vnto the search and imbracing of spirituall and heauenly graces? Are we so delighted with the same as to make them our meditation, night and day, & so euen as it were to lodge in them? Are our affections so fixed & set, that wee doe euen ioy to behold the fruits of righteousness: Nay rather, is not euery man almost fallen on sleepe, and doth not the minde euen lodge in the desires of these

earthly things. Is not the whole care and study how to heape vp gold & siluer, how to get Lands and possessions: Shall the Lord let vs alone in this estate? Whether will we fall: whether will we runne? how great is the complaint that is daily vttered euery where, against the couetousnesse of those that should be lights & guydes vnto others? The Lord calleth and knocketh daily, to haue vs open vnto him. And if we account it a good thing to enioy still our worldly peace and prosperitie: Let vs cheerfully and willingly rise vp; let vs offer our selues to goe into the Fieldes, and to lodge among the sweete things.

Doubles there is great hope, if we raise vp our mindes to doe as the holie Spouse here dooth, wee shall enioy still all good things. If not, wee shall haue some great afflictions to raise vs vp: For the Lord will not suffer his Church to goe to vtter ruine. It is best for vs (if we could wisely consider of it) and most for our ease, to do that which the spouse doth here, before affliction come: for then we shall prevent it, and turne it away. And now beholde, how she doth proceed in this matter, longing for the day of the Marriage.

*Let vs
rise*

rise vpe early to the Vines, Let vs see if the Vine Flourish, whether it hath budded the small grapes? there will I giue thee my lone.

The flourishing of the Vine, budding of the small grape, and likewise of the Pomegranates, are the fruits of the graces of God in the assemblies, and the signes of the approaching of the Marriage day. The gifts and graces of the holie Ghost should be powred forth in vaine, if these sweet fruits should not therevpon bud and flourish.

And when these thinges are, or with these things, the Bride saith, shee will giue her loue to Christ. Shee will giue vp her selfe to loue him, yea euen perfectly when the day of the Marriage commeth.

The Faithfull do now loue the Lord Iesus, somewith greater loue, som with lesse, according to the measure of their Faith. For look how much more firmly and assuredly a man feeleth the loue of God towards him, so much more seruently doth he loue God. And so the Bride speaketh here of an increase of her loue: As his graces abound towards her, and the fruites thereof more increase, so her loue shall more increase, and especially at the time when she shall be fully vnited vnto him.

In

In the next verse shee mentioneth her fruites, and that she reserueth them wholly to Christ her wel beloued. The *Mandrakes haue given their smell*, (saith shee) or as some do take the word more generally, for all amiable flowers, such as be faire and louely : For the Church is as a garden of sweete flowers.

Moreouer, shee mentioneth the plentie of good fruites, both newe and olde, which bee within her gates, and that shee hath reserued and kept them only for him. These are most commendable things that she speaketh of: first, that she doth so flourish and abound in sweete things, which are all holy vertues and fruits of Faith, and secondly, that shee keepeth them for her Lorde. For the true Spouse is chaste and faithfull vnto Christ : she trusteth in him alone, shee runneth not a whoring after false Gods : but she worshippeth and honoureth her Lord with all the fruits of her Faith : *My loue* (saith shee) *I haue kept them for thee.*

The Church in this place differeth much from that which the Lord complaineth of in the fift chapter of the Prophet Esay, for there he sheweth what he did for his vineyard,

yard, and when he looked it should bring forth good grapes, it brought forth stinking grapes. The generall estate of our Church in this Land is liker to that in the Prophet, then to this heere spoken of.

The stinking-Grapes hang amongst vs in great clusters, very plenteously euery where: For what vices doo not abound? but the amiable Flowers, and the sweete Fruites both new and olde how scarce are they? Let vs assure our selues, that if wee be not of the number of those which bring forth sweet fruities vnto Christ, it shall not auaille vs, that wee haue place for a time in the visible Church, and be named and reputed Christians. Thou art a branche of the Vine: but as it is written, or as Christ saith, *Euery branche in mee that beareth not good fruite, he taketh away.* Iohn 15.

The Lorde of his infinite goodnes and mercie, looke vppon this Realme, and so dresse this Vine, that it may flourish, and bring forth good Fruite, and in more plentifull manner then hetherto, least the Kingdome of God be taken from vs, and giuen to a Nation, that will bring forth the Fruits thereof.

She proceedeth on forwards in the next chap.

chapter, declaring what a great desire shee hath to be in his presence, and to retaine him with her, which ariseth from a vehement loue, whose heat cannot be quenched, as shee afterwards expresseth.

They that be of one familie, as Brothers and sisters, do dwell together in familiaritie, each doth vsually know where to find other. According to this she saith: *Oh that thou werest as my Brother, that sucked the breasts of my Mother, I would finde thee without, I would kisse thee, then they should not displease mee.*

The time will come when she shall indeed dwell with him, as brothers and sisters do dwell together, when there shall be most neere familiaritie, when she shall find him, and imbrace him, and for this time, she doth wish. Indeed she hath great cause to wish that she might once come to dwell with him: for the fulnes of her ioy and felicitie consisteth therein.

He doth not now indeed leaue her comfortles, while she is vpon Earth, but giueth her the comfortable signes of his presence, and at some times more then other, but she lyeth subiect vnto many reproches, contumelyes, and proud scornings of the wicked

ked & vngodly men of this world. Therefore she sayth, *also they shall not despise me.* The glorie of the whole Church shalbe so great that her proudest enemyes shall not despise her, but wonder at her. The faithfull are now the children of God, but as S. Iohn sayeth, *it dooth not appeare what they shall be,* 1. Iohn. 3.

An easie thing it is now to contemne and despise the most godly that liue vpon the earth: For the blind world canot iudge but according to outward appearance.

And so because they see not in them outward glorie, they raile on them, they re- proach them, they account them euen as abiectes, and most contemptible. But, when they shall appeare with Christ in glorie, their glorie shall bee so great that none shall despise them.

The diuels and all the damned cannot but be tormented with enuie, at the beholding of the glorious estate of *Gods chosen*, whom they had in derision, and the ende of whose life those reprobate men accounted foolishnes, the diuell hardening their harts & blinding the eies of their mindes: but despise them any longer they cannot. Here is a good comfort for such as dwel among

mong scoffers, scorers, and deriders of religion. Let them scoffe and deride for a time at such as studie to please God : the time will come, when all basenes and all infirmities beeing remoued, they shall behold them in another estate, in which they shall not despise them.

After shee hath expressed her wish, and what benefit she shall receyue thereby, she sheweth what dutie shee for her parte will performe vnto him. For, a very vnreasonable thing it were, that the Church receiuing so great benefites by Christ, should not render some duties of thankfulness vnto him. And therefore she saith, *I will leade thee, & bring thee into my mothers house.*

Ierusalem from aboue is the Mother of all, the Church at any time vppon Earth is her daughter. The house of this her Mother, then in this place, seemeth to bee the Heauens, into which the Church shall accompanie the Lord. For, she shall neuer dwell together with him, in that familiar sorte which shee spake of, vntill she come there. The next clause standeth doubtfull, whether wee shall translate it, thou shalt teach mee, or shee shall teach mee? For, in the Hebrew Tongue in the Future

ture, the same word standeth for the third person Feminine, that is, for the second Masculine. And so I say, it standeth indifferent here by the word, whether we say, thou shalt teach me, or shee shall teach me. True it is, that the Lord *IESVS* is in a double respect, the onely Teacher, and that is thus: that onely his doctrine is to bee taught, and hee alone lighteneth with his spirite. But the vniuersall Church, as the mother of all particular Churches, dooth as an instrument vnder Christ, teach and instruct with the same Heauenly doctrine. And so we may take it here that she sayth vnto Christ, thou shalt teach mee (which I take to be the righter, if wee take it here to bee spoken of the time when the Church shall dwell with Christ in the Heauens: For then there shall be no more teaching by men) or that she saith, her Mother shall teach her, or hath taught her, if one cause may be vsed for another. But what is that she is to be taught? Euen how she ought, or how she may rightly performe her dutie towards Christ, and that is set forth in the next wordes, *I will cause thee to drinke spiced-wine, or wine of the Pome-granates.*

According to the similitude in Earthly
things,

with a daintie Banquet, in her Mothers house. For, that is meante by the spiced wine, and wine of the Pome-granates. The spirituall things thereby signified, are the praises by which she will magnifie and set forth his glory. The Lord hath no need of any creatures to set forth his glory and praise: for hee hath all fullnes of ioy and happinesse in himselfe: but it is his helie will that his creatures shall be partakers of his glorie, and that they shall set foorth his praise, and the same praising of him is most acceptable & delightfom vnto him, which the Bryde expresseth here by spiced wine, and by the iuyce of the Pome-granates. This may encourage vs to bee most readie and forwards in glorifying the Lorde, seeing it is so delightfome and pleasing in his sight. If our obedience, our thanks, our praise, our glorifying God, bee as spiced wine vnto him, what wretches are wee, if we cannnt thereby be moued vnto those holy duties?

The two next verses we haue had before: the one, how Christ dooth embrace his Church, support, comfort, and vphold her with both hâds. She doth rest in his armes: For, as she sayeth, *His left hand is under my head,*

head, and with his right hand hee doth embrace me. Were it not for this, the Spouse could neuer endure heere in the worlde.

This is our comfort, that the Lord Iesus doth thus, as it were, with both hands, or both his armes vphold and comfort his chosē. The other verse is a charge, that she layeth vpon the daughters of *Ierusalem*, that they doe not stirre vp, nor wake her loue vntill hee please. There bee some words omitted of the forme of the charge giuen before, but the matter is all one. She doth very seriously enioyne her companions or daughters to behaue themselves so reuerently and soberly in the presence of this most glorious Bridegroom, that no cause be offered vnto him of displeasure, by which he might take occasion to depart. When our Lord Iesus sheweth himselfe most present with his people, by euident tokens of his graces and heavenly gifts: such is the vnreuerent wantonnesse of some, that they doe not consider in whose presence they be. They bee in the Assemblies, as it were in the Alehouse, or in an Inne: so little they regard the presence of Christ or holy things. God grant that we may regard this charge laid vpon vs.

Z

THE

The foureteenth Sermon.

CH AP. VIII.

5 *Who is this that commeth vp out of the wildernesse leaning vpon her welbeloued? I raysed thee vp vnder an appletree, there thy mother conceived thee, there she conceived that bare thee.*

6 *Set me as a scale on thine heart, and as a Signet vpon thine arme, for loue is as strong as death ieaousie is as cruell as the grane: the coales thereof are fiery coales, and a vehement flame.*

7 *Much water cannot quench loue, neyther can the floudes drowne it. If a man should giue all the substance of his house for loue, they would greatly contemne it.*

V**V**E haue had in this song the state of the Church here vpon earth, variable after diuers sorts: as euē now calling and crying out for her welbeloued: not long after wee haue her, as it were set downe, and the bridegroom calling vpon her to arise and come away: yea sometime she is not onely set downe,
but

but also shee is laid downe and a sleepe, & vnmindfull of her duty. The godly doth not continue alwayes alike: but this wee must know, that howsoeuer they swarue for a time, yet they returne, and their end is commendable. And therefore the church here euen to the end of this song continueth in faith, in zeale, and in performance of all good duties. Here is no more swaruing, here is no dulnes or slacknesse any more mentioned. This I say, may bee noted, that all and euery one of the true beleeuers, euen the chosen of God, stand to the end.

But let vs now come vnto the wordes that I haue read vnto you. First in generall, the Bride doth declare her most ardent loue towards Christ in all these three verses. As the words doe stand in our English translation, it cannot be discerned who vttréth this sentence, *Who is this that ascendeth vp out of the wildernesse, leaning upon her welbeloued? I raysed thee vp vnder an apple tree, &c.* For there is nothing by the speech to hinder, but that the Brides groome may speake it touching his bride, that he stirred her vp vnder an apple tree. Also it may seeme to be the speech of som

other, and least of all it seemeth to be the speech of the bride: but the Hebrew text doth make it most cleare, and out of all doubt and controuersie, that it is the bride which speaketh, because this clause, *I rayfed thee vp, &c.* and also this, *Thy mother conceived thee*, are spoken in the masculine gender, as to a man, and not as vnto a woman. In her first words then she setteth forth the vehemency of her loue, as it were by a comparison, saying, *Who is she?* (for so the words are) that *commeth vp, &c.* As if shee should say, where is shee to be found that hath shewed the like loue to her welbeloued, that I haue shewed vnto mine? Where is there any Bride that hath by such effects declared her loue to her Bridegroom, as I haue to mine? That hath taken such trauell, and endured so many afflictions, passed through so great perils to come to her spouse, as I haue vnto mine? What then will some man say, is this the humility of the Church? Dooth she now glory and boast what shee doth for Christ? This her boasting is not in her selfe, or in her own merites, or in any vpbraiding manner, what she had done for Chrtst: it is not contrary vnto humilitie:

For

For the faithfull when they haue beene very feruent In loue and zeale towards Christ, and haue endured great things for his sake, may to their comfort, both remember, and euen mention to the Lord, what they haue endured and gone thorough for his sake. For withall they do acknowledge, and that vnfaignedly, that they haue beene enabled and made sit therunto by his grace, and so their glorying is not in themselues but in the Lord. Moreover, when we can rightly call to minde, and mention what hard things wee haue willingly endured for the loue of Christ: it boldneth vs to make request vnto him, For this matter reade the last Chapter of Nehemiah, where you shall find, how hee reckoneth vp what, & what he had done: and then prayeth to the Lord to remember him therein, & in v. 22. he craueth that he would pardon him according to his great metey, whereby it appeareth that *Nehemiah* did not mention his well doing, as it were, to stand in his own deserts, for why then should he pray the Lord to pardon him, according to his great mercy: Euen so the Bride here, mentioning what shee hath done for Christ, doth not glory in her selfe.

Now marke with what speech shee vttereth the effects of her loue. *Who is she that commeth out of the wilderness, leaning upon her welbeloued, or as the word may be expounded, accompanyning her welbeloued* Who is shee that to finde her welbeloued and to be in his company, hath ascended out of the wilderness? All the difficulty of the word, which declareth her most vehement loue, is, in ascending for his sake out of the wilderness: What is then this wilderness? It is the world and all worldly desires.

Is that may some man say such a great matter, that shee ascendeth out of the World to seeke Christ? yea, if you do well consider what it includeth in it, you will confesse that shee may well demand who is shee that hath euer done the like? you know what our Saviour sayeth, that *except a man deny himselfe, except he forsake father and mother, wife and children, houses, and lands, yea and his life, and take up his crosse and follow him, he cannot be his Disciple.*

All this is heere included in this one speech of the Bride, when shee saith, *that ascendeth out of the Wilderness.* Hee that
as

ascendeth out of the wilderness, denyeth himselfe for the loue hee beareth to Christ, he mortifieth and subdueth all the sinnefull lusts of the flesh, hee renounceth the delights and pleasures of sinne, which are so sweet vnto the naturall man. And rather then hee will deny the truth of Christ, he will lose and forsake all things that are the deereſt vnto him in the world yea euen life it selfe, although it be with al exquisite torments. We may see then that this is no small thing, that she ascendeth vp out of the wilderness. They that for the loue of Christ forsake carnall pleasures mortifie the lustes of the flesh, forgoe worldly commodities, endure all reproches and bitter persecutions euen vnto death, ascend vp out of the wilderness, for to associate themselves to Christ: and it is a wonderfull vehement loue that carrieth them so farre. Shee may well say then, who is she that ascendeth vp out of the wilderness accompanying her welbeloued? For what Bride is there that hath for her welbeloued, or to accompany her welbeloued, endured such things? Let vs marke well the speech of the Church in this place, because there be

many which professe to loue Christ, which yet doe not ioyn themselues in societie with him to ascend vp out of the wildernes. They professe the Gospell, but yet they take all delights and pleasures of the flesh that they can: they liue euen as other men here in their worldly course do liue: surely, these are not like the bride.

The other part of her speech is harder, when shee saith, *I raysed thee vp vnder an apple tree, there thy mother conceived thee, there shee, &c.* First, we must obserue, that the Bride speaketh as a Spouse that had sought vp her welbeloued, and found him resting vnder an apple tree: she raiseth him vp to go with him into the heauenly places: for thither in heart and affection doe the godly, euen while they liue heere, ascend vp with Christ, when they haue sought and found him. That shee sayth vnder an apple tree, wee must vnderstand that the Apple tree of olde time hath been dedicate to loue. So that in this wee may consider the loue in which Christ resteth towards his church: for were it not for that vnchangeable loue which he beareth

towards her, how shoulde shee finde him, or where should shee finde him? Shee vsed another speech before in this song, and sayde that loue was his Banner ouer her.

By his loue she is drawne vnto him, euen as the Souldiers doe assemble vnder their Banner or Ensigne when it is spread. She here rayseth him vpvnder an apple tree: all is to bee referred vnto his great loue, by that shee is drawne vnto him, by that she findeth him, and by that his Loue so abounding, is her loue towards him kindled and enflamed. Also vnder this Apple tree, the mother of this bridegroome did conceiue him. But who is that mother of Christ that conceyued him in this loue, or through this his loue? Surely her mother is Christs mother: for she is not onely the Spouse of Christ, but as he sayeth, *My sister, my spouse*. Shee her selfe also then is the mother of *Christ*, for the church, euen all the faithfull doe through faith, trauell with *Christ*. That one place, Reuelar. 12. doth sufficiently teach vs this point, where the auncient church of the Iewes, doth trauell with CHRIST
and

and bring him forth. The promises were made of olde, that he should come, and be borne of a woman, the chosen did beleue it, and expect it, vnto their faith hee is born, yea their faith doth euen as it were trauell and bring him forth. So the church is the mother of Christ, and Christ in the Gospell calleth his Disciples his mother, his brethren and sisters: and euery faithfull soule doth through faith conceyue Christ, and the whole Church doth now trauell with child, to bring him forth in his second comming, as the auncient church at his first comming. All this faith apprehendeth his loue, and therefore is sayde here to bee vnder an apple tree: These things are very mysticall, and it doth stand vs vpon, if we will bee the true children of the Church, to looke well vnto them. I meane, that we come to feele the loue of Christ, and therby to conceiue him. For if Christ dwell not in vs, wee haue no part in him: and therefore here is mention of conceyuing and bringing him forth. What is more glorious then to be euen as the mother of Christ? And the same is euery faithfull soule. This ought greatly to stirre vp our minds to seeke the
ho

holy faith. Thus farre you haue seen how shee hath set forth and declared her most vehement loue, by ascending vp with him out of the wildernesse.

Such a thing as the like is not done by any Spouse vnto her welbeloued. Also we see that this her exceeding loue hath bin kindled and enflamed by his loue. And now in the next verse her loue breaketh forth into a vehement prayer, that shee may be ioyned most neerely vnto him, & that hee will alwayes haue her in minde, rendring a reason, that the vehemencie and strength of her loue is such as by no meanes it can be ouercome: This is set forth by comparisns in this verse, and in the next verse following.

First, she requesteth that hee will set her as a seale vpon his heart: a seale in a ring of golde was euer made much account of as a precious thing: shee requesteth that shee may be so esteemed of him, and that he will set her euen vpon his heart. That which is in the heart of a man, is neereſt vnto him, that he mindeth, that hee loueth, that is deere and precious vnto him.

She doth also desire to bee set as a seale
vpon

vpon his arm, that is, as a jewell, alwayes in sight : so that now we may see the summe of her request. She doth in the vehemencie of her loue, desire to be deere, and precious in the eyes of him whom she loueth, and to be most nerly ioyned vnto him as a precious jewell, both in his hart, and vpon his hand, so that he may alwayes minde her, and haue her in his sight : for, wee know that whatsoeuer a man loueth with the greatest loue, that hee desireth to be neere vnto, yea euen fastened vnto it.

What doe you see here in the Bride, how is her affection set ? Shee doth so set her heart vpon *CHRIST* her *Wel-beloued*, she dooth so desire to bee alwayes with him, that, shee vtterly contemneth all things in comparison of him. What is the glorie and the pompe, the Riches, and Honours, & all the pleasures of this world vnto her, more then vile drosse ? And now shee rendereth the rendereth the reason of her desire, from the nature and force of Loue : for loue (saith she) is strong as death.

This is the first comparison, whereby shee dooth expresse the force of her Loue, death is exceeding strong : For if we consider the great might of Princes, of Kings,

of

of E
narc
and
W
death
foun
Yea,
hath
forc
vanc
of, si
of th
fatis
ny v
C
liff
the j
and
to d
C
IES
enc
mie
the
sha
I.
an
con

of Emperours, yea, of all the mightie Monarches in the world, death hath subdued, and cast them downe.

Who hath beene so strong as to resist death ? where hath that mightie man bin found, that could euer eschew his stroke ? Yea, if wee consider from whence death hath his dominion, you shall perceyue the force therof to be such, as that it cannot be vanquished by any creature : the rewarde of sinne is death. This is from the iustice of the most high Iudge : vnlesse sinne be satisfied and abolished, death cannot in any wise be vnderstood.

Could all the Angells in Heauen abolish death ? Nay, they could not satisfie the iustice & the wrath of God for sinne: and therefore they cannot overcome death to deliuer men.

Onely the Almighty Sonne of GOD, *IESVS CHRIST*, God and Man, hath encountred hand to hand with this Enemy, hath taken away his sting, and will at the last vtterly subdue him : So that hee shall bee quite swallowed vp in victorie, *1. Corinth : 15.* Behold then the force and strength of death, and see how shee compareth her loue with it.

Her

Her loue will not endure, (the force of it is such) but that shee must bee neerely ioyned vnto her wel-beloued. I will not be sayd nay, but that shee must be set as a seale, euen as a precious iewell vppon his heart, and vppon his arme. Where there is no loue, there is no ioyning vnto Christ: ther is no such boldnes to come vnto him, but there is feare and horror.

Loue, as Saint Iohn dooth teach, in the fourth chapter of his first Epistle, casteth out Feare: yea, (as he sayth) *Perfect loue casteth out all feare.* Then where loue is weake, the desire to be ioined with Christ is weake, where it is strong, there is a stronger desire: and when it falleth that it be most vehement (as she setteth it forth heere) then is there also the most earnest longing to be euen in his heart, and in his hands, as a thing deere and precious vnto him. If this be the effect of loue, to desire to be so neerly ioyned with the Lord, and the effect arguing the cause, dooth not our weake desire to be ioined with Christ, argue the great weaknes of our loue? The loue of manie is strong to the world, and that causeth them to desire to be euen fastned vnto it: Riches and honours are their

Wel-

Wel-beloued, other they know none.

The next clause is to the same effect, whē she saith, *lealousie is cruell as the graue*. The wordes are, that jealousie is hard as the graue : or as we may call it zeale.

We take jealousie betweene married parties, where the one hath the other in suspicion, that their loue is deriued vnto some other. The Bride heere by zeale of jealousie vnderstandeth the vehement affection of loue, in which shee desireth that his affection may also bee continued towards her. And this she sayth is hard as the graue : wee know what power the graue hath, how harde it is, how inuincible : it deuoureth all men, it keepeth downe all men: For, who hath the strength to come out of it ? There haue beene some raysted vp out of it by the power of God, and chiefly the Sonne of God himselfe : who was buried, and rose againe, but what man hath had the power to raise vp himselfe ? To this force of the graue, she compareth the heate and vehemencie of her loue : So that still shee doth shew, that the greatnes of her loue will not suffer her, but that she must needs couet to be joyned as a signet most neerly vnto him.

In

In the next clause she sayeth, *the coales thereof are fiery coales, and a vehement flame*. It is manifest that she compareth her loue vnto fire, both to the coales, and to the flame: but somewhat we are to note about the wordes.

Thus wee may translate them: *The coales thereof are coales, the fire of the flame of God*. In the first part of this (the coales thereof are coales) the speech is framed to shew that they bee exceeding hote coales, The later part is, to declare that the flame is a wonderfull great flame: for it is as shee sayeth, *The flame of God*.

She setteth forth the greatnesse of the effect, by the greatnesse of the cause: for as God is greater then al, so are his works: so then this flame of God, is as much as to say a most vehement flame. This loue of the church towards Christ, is fitly compared vnto fire, yea vnto a vehement fire, where there be both hote burning coales and a great flame. for the spiritual loue is very hote. For where the soule feeleth the loue of Christ, it is euen set on fire with loue towards him, euen with so hote a loue as shee compareth it heere vnto the coales and flame of fire.

And

And marke well how the flame is the flame of God: This fire indeed is kindled in the hearts of the faithfull by the holy Ghost. If wee then will haue these coales, if we will haue the flame of God in vs, let vs craue instantly, and continually the heauensly fire of the lightning Spirit: then shall we boldly make our request to be set as a signet vpon his heart, and as a seale vpon his arme, and it shall not be denyed vnto vs. For this wee are to assure our selues, that here is not a demaund, or a petition made, which shal be denyed vnto her.

Therefore let euery faithfull soule assure her selfe, that if the heat and flame of loue towards Christ be in her, that then shee is ioined neere vnto him, she is as a precious Jewell set vpon his heart, and also vpon his hand. If our faith bee not such, as that it doth kindle such a burning loue of Christ in our hearts, let vs nor deceiue our selues, it is not the true faith: wee may seeme to haue confidence or boldnesse, but in the time of terror it will fayle vs. Meditate therefore beloued, daily, euen with deepe and serious me-

dition, how rich, how sweete, and how precious the *LORD IESUS* is.

Call to minde what wonderfull Loue hee hath shewed towards vs, what great blessings and benefites hee hath bestowed vpon vs, that thereby (if it be possible) this Heauenly fire may be kindled: yea, so as that it may be euē a most vehement flame.

And now to the last verse, in which he doth yet further declare the heate and force of her loue. Thus be her words: *Many waters cannot quench this loue: the Floodes cannot drowne it.* Herein she doeth purposely in a most high sorte expresse, that nothing can ouercome her loue: it is invincible. As it is written of the loue of Christ, that nothing can separate his chosen from it: so here the Spouse affirmeth, that her Loue towards him cannot be put out.

And this you must obserue, that shee frameth her speech according to her former comparison, when shee sayde, *The coales thereof are coales, and the fire of the flame of God.* For, what fire is there here, but manie waters will quench, at least if Floods of waters doe ouer-flow it? But this

this
the
doot
can,
doot
Reu
can
Ob
groo
neu
sepa
for
let
ter
Ma
vs
end

If
hou
Th
any
add
this
for
Ch
sho

this Heauenly fire cannot bee quenched, the floods cannot put it out. The diuell dooth seeke to cast out all the waters hee can, for to extinguish it : yea, the Dragon dooth cast out a Flood out of his mouth, Reuel. 12. but all in vaine, for this Loue cannot be quenched.

Oh happie Spouse, that loueth her bride-groome with so strong a Loue. Shee can neuer be ouerthrowne : she can neuer be separated from him. We see some that for a brunt doe seeme to bee euen wholly set on fire with the loue of Christ, and after a while it is euen quenched and gone. Many of these there be in these dayes. Let vs beware, for hee that continueth to the ende shal be saued.

There is yet one clause, that she sayth : *If a man would giue all the substance of his house for loue, they would utterly contemne it.* This loue cannot bee wonne away with any goods. The nature of many much addicted to loue riches, and the treasures of this world : ther is scarce any thing of such force to win the heart from Christ : but the Church here affirmeth, that if all treasures should be offred her to draw her loue from

Christ, she would vtterly contemn them.
This is no smal commendation, considering as I sayde, how all men are inclined to loue earthly things. It is most certayne that many thousands which profess christianity, doe contrary to that which the holy virgine here professeth. Gold and siluer, houses and lands do so intice them that they let goe the loue of Christ. They doe sell their loue, yea, they euen sell their soules to the Diuell, for a little money. Much better it is that our loue to him be such, as that in respect thereof, wee account all things here below to be but dung and drosse. The Lord of his infinite mercy grant vs to bee thus affected,

Amen.

CHAP.



The fifteenth Sermon.

CHAP. VIII.

8 Wee haue a little sifter, and shee hath no breasts, what shall wee doe for our sifter when shee shall be spoken for?

9 If shee bee a wall, wee builde vpon her a siluer pallace, and if she be a dore, we wil keepe her in with bordes of Cedar.

10 I am a wall, and my breasts are as towers, then was I as one that found fauour in his eyes.

11 Salomon had a vine in Baal-Hamon: hee gaue the Vineyard vnto Keepers euerie one bringeth for the frutes thereof, a thousand peeces of siluer.

12 But my Vineyard which is mine, is before me: to thee O Salomon belong the thousand peeces of siluer, and two thousand to them

A a 3 that

that keeps the fruite thereof.

13 Oh thou that dwellest in the Gardens,
thy companions hearken to thy voyce, cause me
to heare it.

14 Oh my wel-beloued . flye away, and bee
like vnto the Roe, or to the young Hart vppon
the mountaines of spices.



We are now come to
the conclusion , and
shutting vppe of this
Song. Heere bee in
deede diuers things to
bee handled.

As first here is a mo-
tion, a consultation, or
a demaunde, touching the Church of the
Gentiles, with a promise of great glorie.

Secondly , heere is a comparifon made
betweene Salomons Vineyarde, and the
Church, &c.

And lastly, Christ doth put her in minde
of her dutie towards him : and she cra-
ueth his presence , and protection in all
her neede.

Concerning the first of these , you
know that in the time of Salomon, when
this

this Song was made, yea, long before, and after, vntill Christ ascended into Heauen, the Church was shut vp, and bounded among the Iewes.

God suffered the Gentiles to walke in the vanities of their owne minde manie hundred yeares: but there were prophecies, and there were promises, that the Gentiles should (at the comming of the Blessed-Seede) be receyued to mercie, and bee made one bodie, with the Faithfull of the Iewes. As it is written, *I haue made thee a light of the Gentiles, and the Saluation to the endes of the earth.* Also, *Aske of me, and I will giue thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the vttermoste partes of the Earth for thy possession.* The Faithfull, in the time of the Lawe vnderstanding this, are carefull of them.

For this is the nature of Faith, to breede a loue in the hearts of the godly towards those which belong vnto God, whome they neuer saw: yea, that haue bin long before them, or that shall bee long after them. This loue bringeth forth praier for them, & desire to procure or further their saluation. Fro hence it is that the *bride* doth

motion the matter vnto her Spouse, *We haue a little sister, sayeth shee, and she hath no breasts: What shall wee doe for our sister: in the day that shee shall bee spoken for?*

First, wee are to obserue, that this speech is framed according to the maner here in the world. A young little Damselfell is not to be married vntill shee growe vp in yeares: Shee is not for marriage, vntill she haue breasts to nourish the children that she shall bring forth. Moreover when shee doth come to the ripenes of yeeres to be bestowed in marriage, her friends doe set her forth, and speake for her. So here shee sayeth, we haue a little sister, shee is not yet growne vp, her time is not yet come to be betrothed. She hath as yet no breasts, shee hath not to nourish vp children,

Her time will come that shee is to be commended and spoken for, what shal wee then doe for her? Let vs consider euery point more particularly. At that time there was no Church of the Gentiles, and yet shee sayeth, we haue a sister. How could this be spoken, she was
not

not yet in being? Here wee must obserue, that the decrees and promises of God for things to come are so certaine, & infallible that faith apprehendeth them, & speaketh of them before they be, euen as if they were. And so shee sayth, wee haue a little sister.

It hath beene noted before, that according to the manner of the Hebrewes, the whole is called the mother, and the parts are called sisters: That point is cleare enough: but why then doth shee not say, I haue a little sister, but wee haue a little sister? Is the Church of the Gentiles, not onely sister to the Church of the Iewes, but also the sister of Christ. Yea, shee is the sister of Christ also. For that you see through this song, that the Lord calleth the church his sister.

Heere is the mystery of his Incarnation: for hee hath taken vpon him our nature, hee is become the first begotten among many brethren: *Wee are* (as the Apostle sayeth) *flesh of his flesh, and bones of his bones*, Ephes. 5. So that hee loueth his Church as a Spouse, and as a deere sister: yea the Church of the Gentiles is
preci-

precious vnto him, euen as the Church of the Iewes.

Heere may arise another Question, how the Church of the Iewes could call the church of the Gentiles a little sister, seeing the Churches of the Gentiles in greatness and in number of true children, haue farre exceeded the church of the Iewes.

The Iewes were but one little Nation; many great nations there were of the Gentiles; so that euery way the church of the Gentiles hath in greatnesse exceeded the church of the Iewes. How doth she then call her a little Sister, when shee is greater then herselfe?

I answer, that shee dooth not respect the number of the Faithfull, which the churches of the Gentiles should bring foorth, but the time: because the time was not yet come that the Gentiles should be called, and betrothed vnto Christ: she was as yet, as a little virgine, vnder age to be betrothed.

Then for the next point, there was no spirituall nourishment for Children that should be brought vp to God among the Gentiles: there were not the holy Oracles
of

of God, there was not *the sincere milke of the Word*. There were wise men of this world, great Phylosophers and subtile disputers: but no true doctrine, to conuert the soule to God, or to nourish it vp being conuerted. There was worship of diuels, and all manner of superstition. There was great boasting of diuine knowledge, and high wisdom: but the Bryde knoweth that in respect of the true wisdom, it was nothing but foolishnes. And that is the cause why she saith, her little sister hath *no breasts*.

Then touching the care that she hath for this her little sister, thus shee sayth: *What shall wee doe for our sister, in the day that she shall be spoken for?* The summe of her speech is to know what preferment, what honor, glorie, and dignity shall be layd vppon the church of the Gentiles, at the time when they should be called, and made one bodie with the Iewes.

But why dooth shee not say to Christ, What wilt thou doo for our Sister? seeing all the benefites and all the glorie bestowed vppon the Church doo flowe from him alone? Is there any one Blessing that commeth vppon the Church, where

whereof the Lord Iesus alone is not the Author: How then sayeth she, *What shall wee doe for our sister, &c.*

Doth shee together with Christ bestow the graces and heavenly blessings, This is easily answered. Christ Iesus alone is the fountaine, and the author of all heavenly blessings vpon the Church, and yet the auncient church of the Iewes ioyneth her selfe with him in calling, and decking the church of the Gentiles, because by her ministry the Gospell was to be preached vnto them. Christ Iesus then as the author, bestoweth the heavenly treasures vpon the Gentiles, & the church of the Iewes by her ministry, is an instrument to carry, and to spread the same among the Gentiles.

This wee see was fulfilled, for the holy Apostles and Euangelists which preached the Gospell to the Gentiles, were of the Iewes. Well then shee sayeth to her Spouse: *What shall we doe for our Sister, when wee shall bee spoken for.* Here by the way wee may note, that seeing the church of the Iewes had this care and loue to her little sister the church of the Gentiles, and seeing

seeing that by her ministry, and by the ministerie of her children, the holy Apostles and others, the Gospell was spreade among the Nations, It is our part now to bee as louing and as carefull, and as earnest in her behalfe with the Lord, as shee was for vs: for it doth seeme by the doctrine of Saint *Paul*, Rom. 11. that there shall be againe a church of the Iewes. We ought then to haue the like pittie vpon her, that she had on vs, when we were out.

Now followeth the answer of Christ touching this their little sister, what shold bee done for her, If shee be a wall (sayth hee) we will build vpon her a siluer palace if shee bee a dore, wee will keepe her in with bordes of Cedar. Wee see plainly that Christ did allow of this manner of speech in his Spouse, when she sayd, *What shal we do for our sister*: for he speaketh after the same manner, saying, If shee be a wal we will build vpon her a siluer palace, &c He doth not exclude his Spouse from this worke, for by her Ministry it was wrought, as we noted before.

And now touching the summe of the matter, it is this, that shee shall be builte

to

to bee the City of God, and a precious
 pallace for the king of glory to dwell in:
 For by a wall and a doore, or gate, is
 meant a City, those two parts beeing put
 for the whole, and as I sayde, the siluer
 palace to be built vpon the same, is the
 pallace or temple of the most high God,
 As you know the Church is called the
 temple of God, and the City of God.
 This is the highest glory and dignity that
 can come to mortall men: This matter
 is handled more at large, Reuel. 21: and
 there you may reade touching the walles
 and gates of this City, and touching the
 glory thereof. Thus you may see the
 meaning of this, if shee bee a wall, and if
 shee bee a gate, there shall bee the siluer
 pallace, and the bordes of Cedar.

And now see what the Bride sayeth
 to this, *I am a Wall, and my breasts are
 as towers, then was I as shee that findeth
 peace in his eyes.* The Church of the Iewes
 was at that time when this song was writ-
 ten a wall, or indeed a Citie, euen the
 citie of the great King, & breasts she had to
 nourish vp her children, and God dwelled
 in her as in his pallace: but shee speaketh
 here

here rather vpon this promise of Christ to the gentiles, when that is accomplished, then is she indeed a goodly Citie, then her breasts become as towers: for then doth the doctrine of Christ abound in her. It may seeme to make against this sense, that shee speaketh in the time past, and not in the time to come, then was I and not then shall I be as one that findeth fauour in his eyes. This may be answered two wayes, the one, that the Hebrews do vse the preterperfect tense, sometimes for the future. Or thus, that in the certainty of faith, she speaketh of that which was to come, as if it had beene come.

Here then are three things which the bride gloryeth in touching her happie estate at the comming in of her little sister, the church of the gentiles.

The first is, that shee is then a Wall, euen a goodly glorious citie indeed, and the siluer pallace built vpon her. For although shee were the citie of *God* before, yet now farre more large by the multitude and glory of the gentiles comming in, & being made one body with her *Christ* *le-*
su. But how is it that Christ saying. *If*
shee

shee bee a Wall, speaking of her little sister, shee maketh not answere, shee is a wall, but *I am a wall* ? The reason of this is euident that although as seuerall parties they be called sisters, yet ioyned in one, they be but one Church. Her little sister ioyned vnto her, is become her selfe, for in that respect shee saith, *I am a wall*: I am that glorious cittie of God, in mee is that siluer palace, the palace of the great King

The second thing is : That *her Breastes are as Towers*. Her little sister she sayde had no breasts: but now the doctrine is so plenteous, that her breasts be euen as towers, There is milke to nourish great multitudes of children, for when the word of the Lord went forth from Ierusalem, and the Law out of Sion, vnto the mighty Nations, according as the Prophets foretold it should come to passe, the Lord gaue great gifts of his Spirit, and great light of knowledge in the heauenly misteries and very great multitudes were turned to the Lord. In the time of the Law, the Prophets did vtter the doctrine of God, and speak of Christ, but not so clearly as the Apostles did.

Now

Now her breastes became as Towers.
And then the third thing followeth; that
shee saith: I was then, as shee that findeth
faueur (or as the word is) peace in his eyes.
Not onely her glorie is now greater by so
large an addition of the Gentiles, but also
the time now draweth neere of the marri-
age. For, the Lord alwayes fore-told that
it should be in the last daies, that the Gen-
tiles should be ioyned vnto his people.

True it is, that at this time, euen when
the holic Apostles were sent forth with
this Commission, *Go teach all Nations,*
&c. Math. 28. The Church was won-
derfull glorious in the Lords eyes, and the
time commeth on very fast, that shee shall
enjoy the full happines for ever.

Here wee must consider that the Lord
dealing so gratioosly with vs, to be borne,
and to liue in the time of the Gospell, in
the time of this great Light: in the time
when the breastes of the Church are as
towers, that there is much to bee required
at our hands. If we set light by the hea-
uently doctrine, if we remaine now in ig-
norance and blindnes, if wee be now vn-
thankfull to the Lord, how wretched and
how miserable is our estate? What haue

wce to excuse our selues :

Now we come vnto the second thing, which is the comparison between *Salomon*'s vine-yard and the Church. The Church is called a vine, and a vineyarde, and so the comparison is made here between her and another vine-yard. As King *Salomon* did excell in glorie, so all things that hee had, did in their kinde excell. His vine-yard in *Baal-Hamon*, was a great and a goodly vine yard, and such as he made speciall account of, and receiued great comodity by it. But yet Christ sayeth, it was not like his vine-yard. The differences are noted. The first is, that *Salomon* let out his Vine-yard vnto keepers : the second, that he receyued but part of the fruits, and the keepers another parte for their paynes. But Christ keepeth his Vine-yarde himselfe, and receyueth not a parte, but the whole fruit alone to himselfe. This is the summe. But let vs consider it more particularly by the words : First hee sayth, *Salomon* hath a Vine, as I said before, the person is named : that we may know thereby the excellencie of it. Secondly, he noteth the place, when he sayeth, in *Baal-Hamon* : but not the proper name of any one place, but as if he

hee should say, in a most fruitfull soyle or place: for, *Baal* signifieth a Lord; and *Hamon* a multitude: So that it is as much to say, in a place so plenteous for Vines, that it bringeth forth a multitude of vines. The place is much for a Vine, and therefore when the Lord will shew by the Prophet, that he did all things to his Vineyard, to make it bring forth good fruite, hee doth beginne with the plate: for the Prophet sayth, *My wel-beloved hath a Vine, Bskerem ben Shimon: Elay 5.* Which is as much to say, word for word, in an horn, the sonne of sines. The horn is the corner of an hill: the other is, that it is very fat. Then next, he sayeth, that Salomon let forth his vineyard vnto keepers. For although K. Salomon made great account of his Vine-yrde, yet he did not dwell in it, and keepe it himselfe. He was not so much delighted with it, as alwayes to haue it in his presence, and neuer out of his sight. For, he let it out to keepers. These keepers and dressers of the vineyard must haue their hire, and therefore it is sayd, that they bring euery one a thousand pieces or sickles of siluer, and part they reserue vnto themselves, as he sayth, two hundred pieces.

Our English translation sayth, two thousand to the keepers, but I suppose the fault did growe by the Printers, setting two thousand, for two hundreth, and not by the Translatours, seeing there is not any thing in the wordes, which might leade them to say two thousand.

Now cometo the reddition: *But my Vine-yarde which is mine* (sayeth the Lord) *is before mee.* Here is the dissimilitude, the vineyarde of Christ, euen his Church, his deare Spouse, which appertaineth onely to him, is before him, or alwayes in his presence, he is so delighted therewith, he taketh such comfort and solace therein, and is so deare and precious vnto him, that he is alwayes present with it, and neuer absent from it one minute, he watcheth and keepeth it himselfe, and dwelleth in it.

Salomon let forth his vnto keepers, but Christ doth not let forth his. And as his Eye is alwayes vppon it, to keepe it, so hee hath the whole Fruites to himselfe: *Salomon* had his parte, and the keepers theirs, but not so in this Vine: for, the whole commeth to Christ. I neede not stand here to shewe in many wordes, how precious, and how deare this Vine is vnto
the

the Lord, that he keepeth it himselfe, and how faithfull the Church is, which doth bring forth her fruits to none but him. Also I will not stay vpon this, to shew that Christ being alwaies present with his Church, and not letting it forth vnto keepers, how wicked and blasphemous that doctrine of the Romish Church is, that affirmeth the Pope to be Christs Vicar: as if Christ were absent and had let forth this vineyard vnto him to keepe. Heereupon he challengeth that he is put in trust to doe what he will. Christ saith heere that his vine is before him, his eye is neuer off from it, he keepeth it himselfe, it is not let forth to keepers, as if he were absent like king Salomon from his vine. *Behold* (sayth he) *I am with you vnto the end of the world.* Mat. 28. And he appeareth to Saint Iohn in the midst of the seauen golden candlestickes which are the seauen Churches. Reuel. 1. You may easily then discern what a monster the Pope is, which will needs be his Vicar, which is, one in his steade to do that which he himselfe should doe if he were present. Heere is Antichrist that is, one that taketh vpon him to be in Christs steade, and yet is an aduersarie.

For vnder pretence of doing the duty of an head, he draweth all from Christ to receiue his lawes, and to put their trust in him. Let this monster passe with his seduced company, which are not the spouse of Christ, but his owne spouse. It may heere be demanded, doth not Christ let forth his vineyard to dressers? Did not Paul plant and Apollo water? doe not all faithfull pastors and teachers shewe their duty in keeping this vine? I answer, it is most certaine that the Prophets, the Apostles and all holy teachers may after a sort be called keepers and dressers of this Vine: but yet no further, but as instruments whom Christ useth: for hee is present with them, he worketh by them, and therefore hee holdeth the seauen stars in his right hand, which are the Angels of the seauen Churches, *Reuel. 1*. The keepers of Salomons vine doe keepe it and dresse it in his absence: but the keepers of Christs vine can doe nothing, vnlesse he be with them and worke by them. As I said before, they be but instruments, hee useth them, he is alway present, and doth worke by them. Also it may for the other part be said: shall not the faithfull teachers receiue

ceiue reward for their labours, Yes there be promises of great reward vnto all that doe performe their dutie in that office. Is not that reward some part of the fruite which the vine bringeth forth? No, this reward is promised and given by the Lord, it commeth not by men. And thus much for this matter.

Now to the last thing of all in the conclusion, which is in two parts: whereof the former is the voice of the Bridegrome calling vpon his spouse to performe her dutie: and the latter is the speech of the Bride, crauing his presence and speedy ayd in all her neede. His words are these: *O thou that dwellest in the garden, thy companions hearken to thy voice, make me to heare it.* Heere is (as I saide) the duty of the Bride inioyned, yea the great and speciall dutie: but it is darke to be vnderstoode, because our English translation hath somewhat swarued in the last word of the sentence: for it saith, *make me to heare it*, adding this particle (*it*) which is not in the Hebrew. The word indeede is, *make me beare*, in the most vsuall sense, and it doth signifie to preach, because they that preach, make those to heare whom they

preach vnto. In this place therefore we may take it thus : preach me : for that is the great office of the Church, to publish Christ. But wee will come to it in order as the words doe stand. *O thou that dwellest in the gardens.* The whole Church is called a garden full of all sweet plants, as we had before in this song. The particular Churches, which are the parts of the whole, be called gardens. Now, because the vniuersall Church vpon earth, euen the spouse, is spread ouer all, she is said to dwell in the gardens, that is in all the particular assemblies which know and worship God aright, through the world : Her care is ouer all, they be all her children, and her plants, and so she is said to dwell in the gardens.

The next clause is, *The companions hearkening to the voice, &c.* Who be these companions, which hearken to the voice of the Church, hee willeth her to preach him vnto them ? They be all men, men of all nations and people, which with reuerence doe heare the heavenly Oracles, which the Church doth publish and set foorth. Christ Iesus in the Gospell giueth this precept, *Giue not holy things to dogges,*
neither

neither cast pearles before swine. Those dogges and swine are such people, as the one sort of them neglect and despise the heavenly doctrine, and doe as it were tread it vnder their feete, the other doe hate and persecute both it, and those that bring it. From such dogges and swine, the bridegrome doth heere distinguish the reuerent hearers of the voice of the Church, calling them fellowes or companions. Heere may you obserue by the greatnesse of that dignity which Christ giueth vnto them, how acceptable a thing it is before God, to giue care to the doctrine of God published by his ministers. They be receiued into the fellowship of Christ & his Saints. What higher dignitie, then to be a companion in this societie? How may this encourage vs to giue euen all diligence to hearken to the doctrine of God, vttered by the Church? Then that he willeth his spouse to make these companions that hearken to her voice, to heare of him: it is as much as to say, preach me vnto them. The Lord said to Peter, *Simon Ioanna lonest thou mee, more then these?* And so againe, and the third time.

And

And Peter answering!, *Thou knowest Lord that I loue thee*: he addeth: *Feed my sheepe feede my lambes, feede my sheepe.* As if hee should say, this is the great fruit of thy loue which I require, preach me to my chosen. So the Church professing that great abundant loue of hers, a little before in this Chapter, Christ requireth that she will shew it in preaching him vnto his redeemed. As if he should say, of all loue, publish and preach me, lay open the treasures of life and saluation that are in mee, vnto those that hearken. Heerein then lyeth the performance of the great duty of the Church, and the singular declaration of her loue to Christ, that she preach him. To glorifie Christ, by opening to the world what he is, what treasures bee in him, is a great matter. And because the life of his sheepe doth depend vpon the preaching of him, hee requireth it of his spouse as a thing most acceptable vnto him. Let all the true Ministers of the Gospel looke vpon this, how glorious and how acceptable a worke it is, to preach Christ crucified. How happy are they then whom God hath called to that of

fice,

fice, so they doe faithfully discharge their
dutie ?

And now wee will come to the last
verse of all in this song, which is the speech
of the bride, containing a vehement pray-
er : for as she beganne this song, and with
prayer, so doth she end it, and with prayer.
For seeing we haue no good thing of our
selues, but all good things come downe
from aboue, the beginning and the end of
our song must be with prayer. What e-
ther way haue wee to pull downe graces,
and heavenly blessings vpon vs, but by
this, *Aske and yee shall haue, seeke and yee
shall find, knocke and it shall be opened vnto
you.* Matth. 7. Our whole spirituall life,
our happines and our protection depen-
deth vpon Christ : It standeth vs in hand
then to call continually vnto him, as the
spouse doth heere. Touching the words
of her prayer, our translation saith, *Flie a-
way my welbeloued, and be like to the Roe or
young Hart.* This is not well translated :
for doth the Church desire the spouse to
depart speedily from her ? She requesteth
him to come to her speedily. For the
word indeede is : *Flie my welbeloued, and*
le

be like to the Roe or young Hart: that is come speedily vnto mee. As if shee should say, O my welbeloued, thou dost enioyne me to preach thee, and to lay open the rich treasures and glory of thy grace. I am very willing and ready to performe this dutie, but I shall thereby procure mighty enemies: for the Prince of darknesse will raise vp all the bloody tyrants that hee can against mee: I am feeble and weake of my selfe, and not meete to encounter with them. Be not absent therefore, leaue me not to their desires, but come speedily for my succour and defence, in all my troubles: for then shall I be sure to preuaile. Whether she call the heauens the mountaines of spices, or whether we take it for the mountaine of the Lord heere vpon earth, I take it not much materiall. The summe is (as I said) that she craueth his swift comming from heauen like a Roe, and his speedy aide and succour, to support, to strengthen and to comfort her in all her troubles and afflictions. The Lord giue vnto vs the true vnderstanding of this holy song, and a liuely feeling of the loue of Christ, that
we

we may delight in him , and loue him as
gaine, that we may bring forth the sweete
fruits heere mentioned, and be of his plea-
sant plants , that when this vaine life
is ended , we may raigne with
him for euermore in
in the heauens.

Amen.

F I N I S.
